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# OVERTONES

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Richard Strauss.

# OVERTONES

## A BOOK OF TEMPERAMENTS

RICHARD STRAUSS, PARSIFAL, VERDI, BALZAC,
FLAUBERT, NIETZSCHE, AND TURGÉNIEFF

BY

JAMES HUNEKER

Do I contradict myself?
Very well, then, I contradict myself.
WALT WHITMAN

*WITH PORTRAIT*

NEW YORK
CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS
1910

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TO

RICHARD STRAUSS

A MUSIC-MAKER OF INDIVIDUAL STYLE
A SUPREME MASTER OF THE ORCHESTRA
AN ANARCH OF ART

THIS SHEAF OF STUDIES
IS ADMIRINGLY INSCRIBED

# CONTENTS


| | | PAGE |
|---|---|---|
| I. | RICHARD STRAUSS | 1 |
| II. | PARSIFAL — A MYSTIC MELODRAMA | 64 |
| | The Book | 73 |
| | The Music | 91 |
| III. | NIETZSCHE THE RHAPSODIST | 109 |
| IV. | LITERARY MEN WHO LOVED MUSIC | 142 |
| | The Musical Taste of Turgénieff | 142 |
| | Balzac as Music Critic | 161 |
| | Alphonse Daudet | 179 |
| | George Moore | 188 |
| | Evelyn Innes | 188 |
| | Sister Teresa | 199 |
| V. | ANARCHS OF ART | 214 |
| VI. | THE BEETHOVEN OF FRENCH PROSE | 228 |
| | Flaubert and his Art | 228 |
| | The Two Salammbôs | 244 |
| VII. | VERDI AND BOÏTO | ~~236~~ 256 |
| | Boïto's Mefistofele | 272 |
| VIII. | THE ETERNAL FEMININE | 277 |
| IX. | AFTER WAGNER — WHAT? | 307 |
| | The Caprice of the Musical Cat | 307 |
| | Wagner and the French | 321 |
| | Isolde and Tristan | 327 |


Henry James- 219. 226.

# I

# RICHARD STRAUSS

We cannot understand what we do not love.
— Elisée Reclus.

## I

It is easier to trace the artistic lineage of Richard Strauss to its fountain-head — Johann Sebastian Bach — than to stamp with a contemporary stencil its curious ramifications. And this is not alone because of a similar polyphonic complexity, a complex of themes and their development without parallel since the days of the pattern-weaving Flemish contrapuntists; but because, like Bach Strauss has experimented in the *disassociation* of harmonies, and, in company with his contemporary, the master-impressionist, Claude Monet, has divided his tones — set up, instead of the sober classic lines or the gorgeous color masses of the romantic painters, an entirely new scheme of orchestration, the basic principle of which is individualism of instruments, the pure anarchy — self-government — of the entire orchestral apparatus. This is but a mode of *technique* and does not necessarily impinge upon the matter of his musical discourse; it is a distinctive note, however, of the

Strauss originality, and must be sounded in any adequate discussion of his very modern art.

Borrowing the word with its original connotations from the erudite and clairvoyant French critic, Rémy de Gourmont, disassociation in the practice of Strauss is a species of tone chemistry by which a stereotyped musical phrase is reduced to its virginal element, deprived of factitious secondary meaning, and then re-created, as if in the white heat of a retort, by the overpowering and disdainful will of the composer. We have also the disassociation of ideas from their antique succession, that chiefly reveals itself, not in a feverish, disordered syntax, but in the avoidance of the classic musical paragraph — that symmetrical paragraph as inexorably formulated as the laws of the Medes and Persians, resulting in a Chinese uniformity maddening in its dulness and lifelessness unless manipulated by a man of intellectual power. Strauss is forever breaking up his musical sentences. He does this in no arbitrary fashion, but as the curve of the poem is *ideally* pictured to his imagination. A great realist in his tonal quality, he is first the thinker, the poet, the man of multitudinous ideas; you hear the crack of the master's whip, a cruel one at times, as he marshals his themes into service, bidding them build, as built the Pharaohs' slaves, obelisks and pyramids, shapes of grandeur that pierce the sky and blot out from the vision all but their overwhelming and

monumental beauties of form — the form of Richard Strauss. He is, after his own manner, as severe a formalist as Josef Haydn.

We are now far away from what is called euphony for euphony's sake; though it is, as in Bach's case, art for art with all the misused phrase implies. Intent upon realizing in tone his vision, — the magnitude or validity of which we need not yet discuss, — Strauss allows no antique rubric of fugue or symphony to block his progress; even the symphonic poem, an invention of Franz Liszt, proves too cumbersome for this new man of light and air and earth, whose imagination is at once sumptuous and barbaric. The picture must overflow the old frames. It must burn with an intense life. It must be true. As a man who crept before he walked, walked before he ran, Richard Strauss has the right to our sympathy. He was a wonder-child; he is one of the world's great conductors; he wrote symphonies in the Brahms style during his studious youth; he composed a little literature of chamber music, piano pieces, a violin concerto, and many songs prior to the time when he faced the sun of Wagner and was undazzled by its rays. He knew the scores of Wagner, Liszt, and Berlioz, has imitated, and has forgotten them in the swirling torrential tides of his own strange temperament.

Once music was pure rhythm; once it was howling and gesture. It moved up the evolu-

tionary scale slowly and reached the kingdom of the instrumental arabesque with difficulty; on this side was the ecclesiastical liturgy with its rigorous inclusions and suppressions; on the other, the naïve young art of opera. Let us acknowledge that Bach was the crowning glory of the art polyphonic, that Palestrina closed the door behind him on churchly chants, that Beethoven said the last significant word in the symphony; let us admit these trite propositions, and we have still perplexing problems to solve. The song-writers, Schubert, Schumann, Brahms, shall not detain us — they represent but an exquisite province of music. The neo-symphonists, beginning with Schubert and Schumann and ending with Brahms, are not to be weighed here. They said much that was novel, but they adhered to the classic line; they did not draw in the *mass*, to use the painter's term. It is to Berlioz, Liszt, and Wagner that the new movement should be credited: Liszt, for his prophetic power — he remodelled the symphonic form, but like Moses, he was destined to see, not to enter, the promised land; Berlioz, for adding to the instrumental palette new hues, bewildering *nuances*, and bizarre splendor; Wagner, for banishing convention from the operatic stage, furnishing the myth as the ideal libretto, for his bold annexation of the symphonic orchestra and the extraordinary uses to which he put it. Yet only one of the three men has held out the torch

to future composers — Franz Liszt. Berlioz's talent was largely that of a perverse fresco painter; Wagner quite closed his epoch — one of rampant romanticism — in his music-drama, and by his powerful genius almost swerved music from its normal, absolute currents.

He quite flooded the musical firmament with his radiations. There was but one god and he reigned at Bayreuth; go hence and worship, or else be cast with the unbelieving into outer darkness where there is gnashing of teeth! The music-drama was the synthesis of the arts. It was the panacea of all social evils, and Parsifal we beheld as another Paraclete! Such arrogation of omnipotence was bound to encounter reverses. The Wagnerian mixture of words and music, of drama ranking before music and music playing the handmaid rôle of commentator, has stood the tests neither of its creator nor of time. We know our Wagner now; not as a philosopher — shades of Schopenhauer! — not as a poet — let us not invoke the spirit of Goethe! — not as a reformer, dramatist, revolutionist, but as a composer of genius, with a lot of wrong-headed theories, whose magnificent music floated his doctrines and blinded the younger generation to their speciousness. It is music, not drama, that rules in Wagner's works.

The evil done was this: Music could no longer speak in her own divine voice without the aid of words, without the hobbling drawbacks of

singers, stage pictures, plots, all the thrice-familiar *mise en scène* of the Wagnerian music-drama. Nevertheless, Wagner did enhance the value of the suggestion in music. He invented his own stenographic method of speech and with it literally created a new musical consciousness. A motive means something, is the symbol of an idea, or state of soul; yet we know that if this motive has to be accompanied by dramatic gesture or clothed verbally, then all the worse for it as pure music; it gains visually, but loses on the imaginative side. Before Wagner, Liszt discovered the power of the concise phrase and even labelled it; and before Liszt, came Beethoven in his C minor symphony; while antedating all was Bach, whose music is a perfect storehouse of motivation.

II

And again we reach Richard Strauss by way of Bach; in the music of the modern composer the motive achieves its grand climacteric. His scheme is the broad narrative form, a narration that for sustained puissance and intensity has never been equalled. The new melody is no longer a pattern of instrumentation, nor is it an imitation of the human voice; it is extra-human, on the thither side of speech. It is neither a pure ravishment of the ear, nor yet an abstruse geometrical problem worked out according to the law of some musical Euclid.

Now, music of the highest order must make its first appeal to the imagination; its first impact must be upon the cortical centres. It must not alone set the feet rhythmically pattering, it must not merely stir us to emotional thrilling. Not in the sensuous abandon of dance rhythms, but by thought, — that is, by musical thought, in a chain of tonal imagery, is the aim of the new music. Walter Pater believed, Plato-wise, that music is the archetype of the arts. It was an amiable heresy. But music must stand solitary — it is often too theatric, as poetry is often too tonal. It must be intellect suffused by emotion. Its substance is not the substance of its sister arts. What music has long needed, what Wagner and the church writers before him sought to give it, is definiteness. The welding of word and tone does not produce true musical articulateness. We recognize this in Tristan and Isolde, where incandescent tone quite submerges the word, the symbol of the idea. Erotic music has never before so triumphed as in this Celtic drama. And it is like the fall of some great blazing visitor from interstellar space; it buries itself beneath the smoking earth instead of remaining royally afloat in the pure ether of the idea.

The arts cannot be thus fused. When faith moved nations, the world witnessed the marriage of word and tone in the ritual of the church; no music has been so definite since Palestrina's

as Wagner's — until the music of Richard Strauss was heard. In it we encounter a definiteness that is almost plastic, though never baldly literal. As we noted in our rapid survey, the ethic quality of Beethoven, the philosophic quality of Brahms, the dramatic quality of Wagner, are all aside from the purpose of Strauss. He seeks to *express* in tone alone. The new melody is but an old name for — characterization. And now we reach at last the core of Strauss, who is a psychological realist in symphonic art, withal a master symbolist; back of his surface eccentricities there is a foundational energy, an epic largeness of utterance, a versatility of manner, that rank him as the unique anarchist of music. He taps the tocsin of revolt, and his velvet sonorities do not disguise either their meagre skein of spirituality or the veiled ferocities of his aristocratic insurgency.

The present writer put this question to Herr Strauss in London in the summer of 1903: Has he always subjected himself to the tyranny of an ideal programme before composing? The notion seemed elementary to him. "All good music has a poetic idea for a basis," he replied; and he instanced the Beethoven piano sonatas, the Bach fugues. But he admitted that his brain caught fire at poetic figures, such as Don Juan, Don Quixote, Macbeth; Also sprach Zarathustra, Till Eulenspiegel, Ein Heldenleben. Even a landscape or a seascape could provoke from him the

charming suite of images we find in his Italia. With the poem of Death and Apotheosis, affixed to the score after the music had been composed, we may see that Strauss is not a man pinioned to a formula. But the effect on his hearers of his message, on those hearers who have submitted to his magic, is articulate as has been no anterior music. He moulds his meanings into a thousand forms — for what is form in the academic sense to this arch-disintegrator? And these forms resolve themselves into as many more shapes — shapes of beauty, terror, tragedy, comedy, morose mysticism, ugly platitude; into grimacing runes, shuddering madness, lyric exaltation, and enigmatic gropings; yet never the banal rhetoric of the orchestra, the rhetoric that has seduced so many composers to write for the sake of the sound, for the joy of the style. Strauss always means something. All is in the narration of his story, a story suggested with as much art as the inspiring poem; a misty cloud, perhaps, to the unsympathetic, a pillar of flame to the initiated. It is a new speech; notes, phrases, groups, movements, masses of tone, no longer occupy conventional, relative positions in his tone-poems. The violent disassociation of the old phraseology — his scores seem to be heard vertically as well as horizontally — smug harmonization, melodies that fall gratefully into the languid channels of our memory — in a word, the mechanical disposition of stale material is trans-

formed, undergoes permutation to make way for a new syntax, a nervous, intense method of expression, strange elliptical flights, erratic foreshortenings, with classic and romantic canons cast to the winds; yet imposing a new grouping, a new harmonic scale of values, a new order of melody — the melody of characterization, the melody that pilots the imagination across uncharted territory into a land overflowing with feeling, intellect, tenderness, and sublimity, with irony, ugliness, humor, and humanity; a land not lacking in milk and honey, the land of Richard Strauss! A delectable region is discovered by this young man when we believed that the grim old wizard, Wagner, had locked us up forever in his torrid zone, where, like a Klingsor, he evoked for our parched souls the shadows of bayaderes and monstrous flowers and monstrous passions! Lo, another Richard has guided us to a newer domain, which, if not so fascinatingly tropical, is one where hallucinating chromaticism does not rule, where a more intellectual diatonic mode prevails. Strauss is master of a cold, astringent voluptuousness. His head rules his heart. Above all, he searches for character, for its every trait. He himself may be a Merlin, — all great composers are ogres in their insatiable love of power, — but he has rescued us from the romantic theatric blight; and a change of dynasty is always welcome to slaves of the music habit.

His music did not exhibit its first big curve of originality until the publication of Don Juan, opus 20. His intimate charming songs are the epitome of his peculiar dramatic faculty for clothing in tone, or rather emptying into music, the meaning of the poet. Avoiding the more recondite question of form, it may be said that as in the songs, so is it in his symphonic works. With no other indication than a title (he cannot be blamed for the extravagances of the analytical-programme makers), Strauss pours upon our puzzled and enchanted ears a billow of music terrifying at times: it is a veritable tidal wave; you see it cresting the rim of the horizon and rolling toward you sky high. His Don Juan and Macbeth are romantic in style, and for that reason are praised by those who fear to desert old milestones and wander in the tangled, fulminating forests of his later music. With the story of the mediæval German rogue, Till Eulenspiegel, Strauss unleashes his fantasy. It is a scherzo in form — how he burlesques the form and its very idea! The color scheme is daring, oppressively high, and at times we near the cosmic screech. All is prankishness, darting fancy, consuming irony. The humor is both rarefied and Teutonically clumsy. Till lives, Till is scampish, Till is gibbeted. Tone itself is volatilized into fiery particles that seem to fall upon the listener from dizzily pitched passages. Such a picture has never been hung in the august

halls of music. It offends. It blazes in the eyes with its brilliant audacity, and yet it is new music, music gashed and quivering with rhythmic life. Rhythmically, Strauss is an adventurer into an absolutely novel clime. He touches hands with the far East in his weaving interior rhythms.

Death and Apotheosis is a tone-poem, rather Lisztian in its pompous and processional picture at the close. Its very title calls up the Weimar master's Tasso. But it differs inasmuch as it is better realized externally, while its psychology, morbid in several episodes, is more masterful. It is not a Tasso, not a poet enthroned in deathless immortality, but a soul, *the* soul, which, lying in its "necessitous little chamber" of death, reviews its past, its youth, hope, love, conflict, defeat, despair, and at the end its feverish esctasy, its sorrowful dissolution. Strauss with a secret tiny brush has surprised the human heart in travail. It is pathos breeding. The added touches of realism, the gasping for breath, and the lenten *tic-toc* of the heart, should not disquiet us. Æsthetic propriety is never violated. And Tod und Verklärung is hardly the greatest that is in Richard Strauss.

The much-discussed Thus spake Zarathustra is not, as has been humorously asserted, an attempt to make music a camel that will bear the burdens of philosophy; it is the outcome of profound study in the vaticinating leaves of Nietz-

sche's bible. Its dancing lyricism is reflected in the Strauss score, which opens with a pantheistic evocation of sunrise, uplifting in its elemental grandeur. Seldom has music displayed a result brought about with such comparative simplicity — a simplicity in inverse proportion to its subtlety. It invites to the prayer of the sun worshippers as they salute their round burning god lifting in the blue. The composition is welded by a giant will. It contains so many incongruous elements, that their complete amalgamation seems at first hearing an incredible attempt. It is the old symphonic-poem form of Liszt, but altered, amplified. The themes appear, disappear, surge to insanity in their passion, melt into religious appeal, dance with bacchanalian joy, mock, blaspheme, exhort, and enchant. There is ugly music and hieratic, music bitter and sweet, black music and white, music that repels and music that lures — we are hopelessly snared by the dream tunes of this enharmonic fowler, who often pipes in No Man's Land on the other side of good and evil. The ear is ravished, the eye dazzled; every brain centre is assaulted, yet responds to a new and formidable engine for stimulating ideas and emotions. The Old-World riddle is propounded and left unsolved. And we seem to have grazed an Apocalypse of scepticism in the conflicting tonalities with their sphinx-like profiles.

## III

The greatest technical master of the orchestra, making of it a vibrating dynamic machine, a humming mountain of fire, Richard Strauss, by virtue of his musical imagination, is painter-poet and psychologist. He describes, comments, and narrates in tones of jewelled brilliancy; his orchestra flashes like a canvas of Monet — the divided tones and the theory of complementary colors (overtones) have their analogues in the manner with which Strauss intricately divides his various instrumental choirs: setting one group in opposition or juxtaposition to another; producing the most marvellous, unexpected effects by acoustical mirroring and transmutation of motives; and almost blinding the brain when the entire battery of reverberation and repercussion is invoked. If he can paint sunshine and imitate the bleating of sheep, he can also draw the full-length portrait of a man. This he proves with his Don Quixote, wherein the nobler dreamer and his earthy squire are *heard* in a series of adventures, terminating with the death of the rueful knight — one of the most poignant pages in musical literature. Don Quixote is shown as the quotidian type of man whose day-dreams are a bridge leading to the drab and sorrowful cell of madness. He is not mocked, but tenderly treated, by Strauss. It is upon the broad-backed Sancho Panza that the

composer unlooses his quiver of humorous arrows. The score is thus far — to my taste — the greatest of its maker, the noblest in subject-matter, in dignity of theme, complexity of handling, and synthetic power. To show his independence of all musical form, Strauss selected the most worn — the theme with variations. Amazing is the outcome. No other composer before him, not even the master variationist, Brahms, has so juggled and deployed the entire range of musical material in serried battalions. Virtuosity there is, but it is the virtuosity that serves a psychologist; never is there display for decoration's idle use. All is realistic fancy. A solo violoncello and a solo viola represent the half-cracked pair of Cervantes. The madness of Quixote is indicated by a device musically and psychologically unique. His theme, his character, goes to pieces in mid-air, after the mania of romance reading. The muting of the instruments and general muddling of ideas make the picture of slow-creeping derangement painfully true. Then follow variations, close in their fidelity to the story, and never unmindful of the medium in which it is told. Despite the disquieting verisimilitude of the wind-machine, of the sheep, Strauss has never put forth his astoundingly imaginative powers to such purpose. We are stunned, horrified, piqued, yet always enthralled by this masterful ironist who has conserved his

mental sincerity. The finale is soothing, its *facture* is a miracle of tonal values. Don Quixote, until he surpasses it, will remain a monument to Richard Strauss.

The Hero's Life is nearer the symphony in a formal sense than any of his newer works. It is his most robust composition. The conception is breath-catching, for it is a chant of the *Ego*, the tableau of Strauss's soul exposed as objectively as Walt Whitman's when he sang of his *Me*. The general outline of the work is colossal; it has no wavering contours, and is virile with a virility that shocks. It flouts the critics of the composer and shows a stupendous battle-piece, Tolstoyian in fury, duration, and breadth. Cacophony rules; yet is not a battle always cacophonous? The old-fashioned symbols of trumpet-blasts with ornamental passage-work are here rudely disclaimed; war is cruel, and this episode is repulsive in its aural cruelty. The ancient harmonic order will be indeed changed when such a tonal conflict is accepted by the rear-guard. Often we cannot hear the music because of the score. For the rest, there are apposite quotations from the composer's earlier works, and the *coda* is beautiful with its supreme peace, supreme absorption in Nirvana.

This, then, has Richard Strauss accomplished: He has restored to instrumental music its rightful sovereignty; it need fear no longer the encroachment of music-drama, at best a bastard

art. Enlarged, its eloquence enormously intensified, its capacity for rare, subtle beauty increased tenfold, the modern orchestra has been literally enfranchised by Strauss from the house of operatic bondage. He has revolutionized symphonic music by breaking down its formal barriers, and he has filled his tone-poems with a new and diverse *content.* In less than an hour he concentrates, relates, makes us see, feel, and hear more than could be seen, heard, or felt in a music-drama enduring six. His musical themes, *quâ* themes, are not to be matched with Beethoven's, his melodic invention deviates from the classic prettiness; yet because of his incomparable architectonics, of his majestic grip on the emotional, he keeps us hypnotized as his stately, fantastic tonal structures slowly uprise and unfold like many-colored smoke from the incantations of legendary Eastern genii. He absorbs absolutely our consciousness with a new quintessence of poetic, pictorial, sculptural, and metaphysical art. Music, unaided by words or theatric device, — for the compositions of Strauss may be enjoyed without their titles, — has never been so articulate, so dangerously definite, so insidiously cerebral. Madness may lie that way; but the flaming magic of the man is ever restrained by deep artistic reverence. We catch glimpses of vast vistas where dissonance is king; slow, iron twilights in which trail the enigmatic figures of another world; there are

often more moons than one in the blood-red skies of his icy landscapes; yet the sacred boundaries of music are never overstepped. Little matters the niche awarded this composer by posterity — Richard Strauss is the musical enchanter of our day.

## IV

Richard Strauss was born at Munich, June 11, 1864. He is the son of Franz S. Strauss, formerly first horn player in the Bavarian Court Band. His father has written studies and other compositions for his instrument; and, as his son said, "he could play most of the instruments in the orchestra." He sat under Wagner's stick, but was not a Wagnerian. Once he played so well that Wagner exclaimed, "I fancy after all, Strauss, you cannot be such an anti-Wagnerian as they make out, for you play my music so beautifully." "What has that got to do with it?" answered the stubborn artist. The mother of Richard was born Pschorr, and is a daughter of the wealthy Munich brewer. The boy received his first piano lessons at the age of four and a half from his mother. Later he studied with August Tombo, a harp player, and took up the violin under Benno Walter. At the age of six he composed a three-part song, a valse, and a polka — Schneider Polka, he called the dance. Before he went to school he had tried his hand

at songs, piano pieces, and an orchestral overture. Sent to the elementary schools from 1870 to 1874, the gymnasium from 1874 to 1882, and the university from 1882 to 1884, Strauss laid the foundation of a comprehensive culture, a catholicity in taste, a love of *belles lettres*, and a general knowledge of the world's literature. He early mastered the technics of the piano and violin, and in 1875, with Kapellmeister Fr. W. Meyer, theory and composition. This course lasted five years. The composing went on apace. A chorus for the Electra of Sophocles and a festival chorus were given a hearing at a gymnasium concert. Three of his songs were sung in 1880; and in March, 1881, his string quartet in A, opus 2, the scherzo of which he wrote in his fifteenth year, was played by Benno Walter's quartet, to whom it was dedicated. Four days later his first symphony was accorded a hearing under Hermann Levi, and the extreme youth of the composer called forth remonstrances. In 1883 Berlin heard his C minor overture under Radecke. Both are still in manuscript.

Of this formative period Strauss has told us that, "My father kept me very strictly to the old masters, in whose compositions I had a thorough grounding. You cannot appreciate Wagner and the moderns unless you pass through this grounding in the classics. Young composers bring me voluminous manuscripts for my opin-

ion on their productions. In looking at them I find that they generally want to begin where Wagner left off. I say to all such, 'My good young man, go home and study the works of Bach, the symphonies of Haydn, of Mozart, of Beethoven, and when you have mastered these art works come to me again.' Without thoroughly understanding the significance of the development from Hadyn, *via* Mozart and Beethoven, to Wagner, these youngsters cannot appreciate at their proper worth either the music of Wagner or of his predecessors. 'What an extraordinary thing for Richard Strauss to say,' these young men remark, but I only give them the advice gained by my own experience."

Then came a stroke of luck. Von Bülow's attention being attracted by the charmingly written and scored serenade (opus 7) in E flat for thirteen wind instruments, secured it for the repertory of the Meiningen orchestra. It is scored for two flutes, two oboes, two clarinets, four horns, two bassoons, and contrabassoon (or bass tuba). His second symphony in F minor was composed during the season of 1883–1884. It was first played in New York under Theodore Thomas, December 15, 1884, and later by Walter Damrosch. It shows many traces of the young composer's close study of Brahms. The horn concerto, opus 11, and the piano quartet, opus 13, were composed at the

same period. The latter won a prize. It shows a straining for bigger effects, as if the form were too cramped for the strenuous composer. The andante and scherzo are the more agreeable movements. The Wanderer's Sturmlied, after Goethe's poem, beginning, "Wen du nicht Verlässest, Genius," revealed the taste for literary themes and themes that exalt the individuality. This opus 14 is written for six-voiced chorus, two soprani, one alto, one tenor, two bassi, and orchestra. It also shows the serious influence of the Brahms Schicksalied. A second suite for wind was first given at Munich, conducted by the composer.

"Bülow, who was very fond of my father," says Strauss, "interested himself in me, and I have much to thank him for. He started me on my conducting career. My first experience of standing before an orchestra was in connection with the performance of a suite, in four movements, for wind instruments, which I had composed at his request. It is still in manuscript. Bülow made me conduct it without any rehearsal!" This must be the grand suite in B flat, misleadingly numbered opus 14 — the same opus number as the Sturmlied. It is scored for thirteen wind instruments, and has been heard in London. The introduction and entire fourth movement are said to be the best. It is early Strauss. Strauss became music director in Meiningen, October, 1885, conducted

his own F minor symphony and also made his début as pianist in Mozart's C minor concerto. Von Bülow honored him by conducting the concerto.

Strauss had already come under the influence of Alexander Ritter (1833–1896), a violinist in the Munich Orchestra who had married a niece of Wagner's. Ritter, like von Bülow, was a man of strong magnetic personality, and both were warm-blooded Wagnerians and Lisztians. As boys they listened to that wonderful performance of Beethoven's Choral Symphony given by Wagner at Dresden in 1849, and the two young gentlemen schoolfellows used to doff their caps every time they passed the master's windows in the Ostra-Allee. "Ritter was exceptionally well read in all the philosophers, ancient and modern, and a man of the highest culture. His influence," says Strauss, "was in the nature of a storm-wind. He urged me on to the development of the poetic, the expressive, in music, as exemplified in the works of Liszt, Wagner, and Berlioz. My symphonic fantasia, Aus Italien, is the connecting link with the old and the new methods." The young composer went to Rome and Naples in the spring of 1886. Strauss tells an amusing incident. "A few days ago I was conducting this symphony at Brunswick, when a policeman appeared on the scene and stopped the performance because, as he said, some condition had not been complied with. Soon after,

however, another policeman came and said the concert might proceed. This unwarrantable interruption caused great uproar, and the audience shouted anathemas against the police. At the close of the symphony I turned to the audience and said, 'You see, ladies and gentlemen, in this Italy there are no anarchists!'"

In 1886 he left Meiningen to become third Kapellmeister under Levi and Fischer. He wrote his tone-poem Macbeth at this period, though it bears a later opus number than Don Juan. The former, after a revision and partial rewriting, was dedicated to Alexander Ritter, and first performed under von Bülow in Berlin. Strauss remained at Munich until 1890, when he received a call from Weimar. In the ducal city he shed his pupil's skin and developed into a brilliant conductor. His radical tendencies were now beginning to be recognized, and his espousal of the music of the extreme Left caused his conducting of Wagner and Liszt to become notable. At Leipsic his influence was felt as conductor at the Liszt society. He has always warmly defended the music of Wagner, Liszt, and Berlioz.

In 1892 his lungs were affected and a protracted journey to Greece, Egypt, and Sicily was necessary. He was not idle, however, for on his return his grand opera, Guntram, opus 25, and dedicated to his parents, was produced at Weimar. He married in 1894 Pauline de Ahna, the daughter of a well-known Bavarian

general, and the soprano who created the Freihild in Guntram.

From Weimar Strauss returned to Munich as Court Kapellmeister, and three years later he succeeded Levi as general music director. Not satisfied with matters, he left Munich to become Kapellmeister at the Berlin Royal Opera, which position he still occupies. He had conducted the Philharmonic Orchestra of Berlin after the death of von Bülow, but the trip from Munich to Berlin was too exhausting, and Arthur Nikisch was permanently engaged. Strauss has conducted at Bayreuth, festivals at Liège, Cologne, Leipsic, Milan, Moscow. In 1897 he visited London, Paris, Amsterdam, and Barcelona, and a year later Zurich and Madrid. In 1903 he conducted, in conjunction with Wilhelm Mengelberg, a series of concerts in London, a Strauss festival organized by Hugo Goerlitz. The Amsterdam Symphony Orchestra, a remarkable aggregation of artists, played. His Parisian experiences were most gratifying; he appeared in the dual rôles of conductor-composer, his wife singing his lieder with exquisite taste.

As a conductor he ranks among the great ones. He is particularly sympathetic in his readings of modern works, though any one who has heard him direct a Mozart opera can never forget the impressions gleaned — the blitheness, sanity, sweetness. He is cool, never eccentric

in his beat, and does not play upon his own personality, as do some other conductors.

A little critical and polemical literature has grown up about the Strauss case. In addition to the analytical programmes, some of them too fantastic to be of value, Hans Merian has written an extended study of Also sprach Zarathustra; Gustav Brecher, Richard Strauss; Dr. Erich Urban, Strauss *contra* Wagner — in which Wagner is proved to be old-fashioned; Urban has also put forth a pamphlet-essay, Richard Strauss. In his youth, writes Urban, Wagner cried exultantly, "I am a musician;" in his age he mumbled, "I am a poet." And he really believed he had discovered in the Greek an excuse for his mutilation of drama and music. Then Urban turns to Liszt. Liszt, he said, went far, but not far enough. He grew timid when he saw the logical outcome of his experiments. He still clung to the classic, to the formal. Strauss appears. Urban thinks he showed absolutely no individual talent until his opus 14, Wanderer's Sturmlied. His early work is Schumann, and Schumann at his worst. The learned critic does not believe that either von Bülow or Ritter counted in the formation of Strauss. He looks upon Guntram as an accident, and Heldenleben as an answer to Zarathustra. He does not believe the latter to have been inspired by Nietzsche, — Strauss composed it when he discovered that

Nietzsche's philosophy coincided with his own revolutionary programme. And as the same ideas are expressed in Heldenleben, the titles could be exchanged without any harm. Truly a Daniel come to judgment! It is in Heldenleben that Urban sees Strauss at the top notch of his ideals. Here is musical drama without the words, scenery, stage, or singers.

Brecher assigns only six periods to the development of his hero. Brahms has much to say in the early Strauss music. The critic outlines the orchestra before Strauss came: Haydn was the first real instrumental writer, one who dispensed with the vocal character; Mozart lent the orchestra freedom and beauty; Beethoven endowed it with individuality; Berlioz was all color; Liszt, patterning after Berlioz, developed thematic variety; and Wagner employed both the color of Berlioz and Liszt's theme-weaving for his profounder and more poetically dramatic music. Strauss followed all these men, but returned to pure instrumental forms, avoiding in his later poems the stringent outlines of the absolute scheme, and being more eloquent than his predecessors. Macbeth and Don Juan belong, says Brecher, to the third period of Strauss. Death and Apotheosis is a reactionary period, as is Guntram — too much Liszt and Wagner, too much chromaticism. From opus 27 to 34 is the fifth period, nearly all songs, wonderful songs. Till Eulenspiegel belongs to this arbi-

trary grouping, and it closes with Also sprach Zarathustra. The sixth period opens with Don Quixote and Heldenleben. Beauty is routed by truth. Even Urban thinks Don Quixote is a colossal joke, written to astound the Philistines.

But these writers are in sympathy with the composer. The terrible Hanslick of Vienna is not. He, even at the expense of contradicting himself, praised Wagner's melodic gifts as an offset to the more meagre thematic invention of Strauss. His criticism of Also sprach Zarathustra is not criticism — it is scarification. He heard the work in Vienna, on a programme in which figured Weber's Euryanthe overture, and the C minor symphony of Beethoven. The good doctor is a joy to read in these days when politeness has closed critical mouths. He first drags out the memory of Liszt and stamps on it — Liszt, who begged from literature his subjects for a symphony, and "making the alms pass as music." Strauss goes to philosophy instead of to poetry. And then he slashes to the right and left of him. It is capital reading, if not convincing. The tone-poems of Richard Strauss are a musical refutation of Hanslick's theories. There is no "content" in music, he declares; "the egg stands, anyhow," retorts Columbus-Strauss!

The Strauss piano music is hardly inviting to any but the most devoted. Severe in outline,

sombre in hue, it leans not to the sweet intimacies of Chopin or Schumann. Opus 5 is a solo sonata in B minor, some thirty pages long. I prefer Tschaïkowsky's effort in the same form. If it is not as *klaviermässig*, it is more mellow. Stern, and in the mood Doric, the several movements of the Strauss sonata are sinewy rather than plastic, though the adagio in E has some moving moments. The scherzo is light and bright in execution. The composition will never become popular. In opus 3 there are some pieces of interest, — five in all, — and here Schumann's influence is writ plain. Dense is the pattern, while the ideas are based on a poetic idea. Two numbers from opus 9, Stimmungsbilder, will please. They are a tender Träumerei and a delicate lyrical bit called An Einsamer Quelle. In the latter the harmonic changes recall Wagner. The most ambitious piano music is the burleske in D minor for piano and orchestra. This must have been written in 1885, though it bears no opus number. It is extremely difficult in the solo part, and not especially grateful. I can recall no one but Eugen d'Albert and Herr Backhaus as having played it — the latter at the London Strauss festival of 1903. Here Brahms is to the fore, the very opening bar of the piano being the theme of Brahms's first D minor ballade. But how different the treatment! Bitter, rather airy, more sardonic than witty, this burleske

demonstrates that the Teuton often unbends as sadly and stiffly as the Briton. Compare the piece with the incomparable jesting of Scarlatti's burlesca, that joke which begins in G minor and ends in D minor! It is the eternal difference between the Italian and the German. Crabbed I call this burleske. The 'cello and piano sonata in F is a capital composition, and so is the sonata in E flat for viola and piano. His concerto for violin and orchestra in D minor has never received the attention it deserves; and I wish for the sake of novelty that the beautiful horn concerto, opus 11, would be given. For the waldhorn Strauss has a natural sympathy.

The lieder literature is important in quality. He has written nearly a hundred songs, some of them priceless in idea and workmanship. It is in this form that his friends and enemies have agreed upon his melodic invention. This refers to the various collections numbered opus 10, 15, 17, 19, 21, 26, 27, 29, 32, and 34; but I wonder whether the later collections in opus 39 and opus 41, 43, and 44 are received with the same enthusiasm. Some of them are harmonically difficult to grasp, and many are deceptive; when Strauss seems at his simplest, he is often most irritatingly complex and recondite. But an overflowing meed of praise must be awarded the opus 15, the lovely serenade in F sharp from opus 17, several from opus 21 and 27, and all of opus 29. A critic considers O warst

du mein, from opus 26, number 2, and Sehnsucht, opus 32, as the most beautiful of all. No mood seems denied Strauss. His exposition of the most exotic is indicative of a subtle, rather than a sensuous, musical nature. Yet how simply and naturally he has indicated a primitive emotion in Jungenhexenlied, opus 39, number 2. The song is a masterpiece. The sturdy power, the sheer muscularity, of The Workman from the same set, should make it beloved of manly male singers. Its great, resounding blows in F minor stir one's very soul. And its sentiment is that of healthy anarchy, as befits the text of the poet Richard Dehmel. Death the Releaser, Leises Lied, and To my Son complete this opus. The last has a noble ring. The Silent Longing is the capture of an exquisitely evanescent mood. There are five numbers in opus 41, — a Cradle Song; In der Campagna; On the Shore, — full of introspective beauty, a dashing, vagabondish song; Brother Good-for-nothing; and Whisp'ring Songs. In all the music seeks the emotional curve, in all is there absolute fidelity to the poetic theme — that is, fidelity as the composer conceives it. Of mere sensuous or decorative music-making there is none. Strauss is ever beset by the idea; whether dramatic, metaphysical, or romantic-lyric, the idea takes precedence of the sound that clothes it. So there is little pretence of form, little thought of vocal exigencies, while the piano accompani-

ments are the most difficult ever written. If he hammers out epics in his orchestral compositions, in his lyrics he is the patient, curious master of miniature, the ivory worker of shapes exotic.

Guntram, for which Strauss wrote his own book, the first opera of this composer, is not familiar to Americans. It was never a great success, despite its earnestness and indisputable depth. Modelled on Wagnerian lines, it has for a subject the doings of The Fighters for Love, an order of knights, which, Parsifal-like, in the middle of the thirteenth century wars for the Cross and Brotherly Love; but with song and not with sword. Guntram, the hero, is a Fighter for Love, and his adventures and passion for Freihild form the basis of the book. The preludes to Acts I and II have been played in this country. The first is a lovely scheme of orchestration, Wagnerian in texture, and celebrates the yearning desire which the singers have consecrated to art and to the Cross. The second prelude is a brilliant, joyous picture of a Festival of Victory. The form and development are absolutely free. It is interesting to note, on the last page of the first prelude, an essential-turn that comes straight from Götterdämmerung. Strauss employs it with skill as a pregnant motive. While it is too short for concert performance, the prelude of the last act is the embodiment of yearning and rich in har-

monic life. The great duo of Guntram and Freihild and Guntram's farewell are noble specimens of dramatic writing. Nevertheless the work lacks big wings.

Two later compositions of Strauss, bearing the opus number 42, are for Männerchor, — Liebe and Altdeutsches Schlachtlied, both after Herder. Two sixteen-voiced mixed *choruses a capella* are also announced. Enoch Arden, opus 38, is a melodrama for piano and recitative. It is an interesting experiment, being melodious and effective. Written for von Possart the German tragedian, the weight of the work falls upon the reader.

At the seventy-seventh Netherrhenish Music Festival in Aix-la-Chapelle, June, 1900, Strauss produced two Grössere Gesänge, opus 44, for low voice and orchestra. Decidedly here the bust is in the orchestra, the pedestal — ! The Rückert and Richard Dehmel are the poets levied upon — the first represented by his Nächtlichtergang, the other by a Notturno.

Strauss occasionally indulges in flashes of sly humor. Here is a footnote he appends to his song opus 31, number 2, Wenn: —

> Should any singers think of singing this song, while the nineteenth century is still in existence, the composer would advise them to transpose it from this point, a half-tone lower (*i.e.* into E flat), so that the composition may thus end in the key in which it began.

Fuersnot, a Singgedicht in one act, book by Ernst von Wolzogen, music by Richard Strauss, was produced at the Royal Opera House, Dresden, November 21, 1901. The libretto is founded on a Netherland story, entitled, The Fire Famine at Oudenaerde. Emil Paur introduced several excerpts, sonorous, brilliant music, at a Philharmonic concert.

When questioned about his future plans Strauss replied: "I have made a musical setting to Uhland's Taillefer for chorus, soli, and full orchestra. I am surprised that musicians have not availed themselves of this fresh, magnificent poem before — at least I have heard of no setting. Altogether one admires Uhland too little these days. When I was younger I neglected reading him very much; but now I find one beauty after another in his writing. I also have material for two symphonic poems, but don't know which one I shall use — if indeed I finish any — now. It usually takes two years before a composition begins to assume form with me. At first there comes to me an idea — a theme. This rests with me for months; I think of other things and busy myself with everything but it; but the idea is fermenting of its own accord. Sometimes I bring it to mind, or play the theme on the piano, just to see how far it has progressed — and finally it is ready for use. You see, therein lies the real art of creation — to

know exactly when an idea is ripe, when one can use, must use it. More and more I cling to the belief that we conscious people have no control over our creative power. For instance, I slave over a melody and encounter an obstacle which I cannot surmount, however I try. This during the course of an evening; but the next morning the difficulty has surrendered itself, just as though my creative forces had toiled at it over night. Several years ago I told a friend that I meant to compose a symphonic poem, Spring. He repeated my remark, and at the making up of the next music festival programme my Spring was placed and I was asked to conduct it! The work is not even composed yet, despite the great number of themes and sketches I have for it. In fact, I don't know when I will compose it — if at all. Sometimes a theme occurs first to me, and I find the poetic mate to it later; but at others the poetic idea begins to take on musical form. I may even compose an opera soon. A young Vienna poet has suggested a libretto which appeals to me very much. A libretto of my own is also receiving some consideration from me.

"The old metre of poetry, the iambic and trochiac rhythms — also the rhyme — are useless in music, because the latter has an entirely different rhythm, and this must necessarily destroy that of poetry when the two are joined. According to my opinion, the most available forms are the Nibelungen verses or a free

prose. Why cannot music express philosophy? Metaphysics and music are sisters. Even in music one can express a view point, and if one wishes to approach the World Riddle, perhaps it can be done with the aid of music. Is not the third act of Tristan transcendental philosophy purely? Lastly, my next tone-poem will illustrate 'a day in my family life.' It will be partly lyrical, partly humorous — a triple fugue, the three subjects representing papa, mamma, and the baby!" This latter is the Sinfonia Domestica of which the first performance anywhere, was announced for March 9, 1904, at Carnegie Hall, New York City.

Jean Marnold, the acute critic of the *Mercure de France*, calls attention to the "melody of Strauss, which is frankly diatonic, the tonal character definitely determined." This statement will be challenged by those who take the composer's middle period as a criterion of his chromatic tendencies. But examine the later themes, and we are forced to agree with M. Marnold. Arthur Symons finds that Strauss is cerebral. He writes: "Strauss is what the French call *un cérébral*, which is by no means the same thing as a man of intellect. *Un cérébral* is a man who feels through his brain, in whom emotion transforms itself into idea, rather than in whom idea is transfigured by emotion. Strauss has written *f.* Don Juan without sensuality, and it is in his lack of sensu-

ality that I find the reason of his appeal. All modern music is full of sensuality, since Wagner first set the fevers of the flesh to music. In the music of Strauss the Germans have discovered the fever of the soul. And that is indeed what Strauss has tried to interpret." W. J. Henderson is open to conviction. He wrote: —

"It is too soon for us to say that Strauss will influence the future. He may leave us nothing but certain purely mechanical improvements in orchestral technics. Even these will have their value. Yet all recent attempts at progress in music have been in the direction of more definite expression, and Strauss may be only a stepping-stone in an advance toward that blissful epoch whose hearers will display as much imagination as its composers, that transcendent condition in which genius understands genius."

Edward E. Ziegler discerns that Richard Strauss is "a master of music mathematics and one who is composing music for the present. It is an easy evasion," he adds, "to shift the responsibility for what the living generation cannot easily or will not willingly grasp and to proclaim that such intricate writing is for the future. But music has ever reflected life, and no other composer has so nearly approached a musical expression of our time as has Strauss. The febrile unrest, the neurotic striving of the hour, all have their musical equivalent in his

greater compositions. Plying the stress of emphasis as Strauss does is characteristic of the present as is typical his use of the enormous orchestra. All life has become agitated by the exaggeration of the hour. It needed but a master like Strauss to express this truth in music."

August Spanuth holds that "Richard Strauss may be a monstrous phenomenon, yet he embodies the domineering spirit of modern music. For more than two centuries composers have endeavored to vindicate the cause of programme-music, which the staunch old champions of 'absolute music' have fought from the outset. However, after the efforts of Berlioz and Liszt, Richard Strauss has succeeded in reversing the question, making it read thus: Is there a future left for instrumental music outside of the descriptive, pictorial, illustrative, suggestive, and philosophizing music of to-day?"

Ernest Newman, in a masterly article, concludes with this telling passage: —

. . . This kind of music adds to our knowledge of man and the world as much as does a play of Ibsen or a novel of Tolstoy. Certainly to any one who knows Strauss's music to Don Quixote, the story of Cervantes is henceforth inconceivable without it; the story itself, indeed, has not one tithe of the humor and the profound sadness which is infused into it by Strauss. What he has done in this work is to inaugurate the period of the novel in music. And here at last we see

the subtle fitness of things that has deprived Strauss of those purely lyrical qualities, whose absence, as I have previously argued, makes it impossible for him to be an absolute creator of shapes of pure self-sustained beauty. His type of melody is now seen to be, not a failing, but a magnificent gift. It is the prose of music — a grave, flexible, eloquent prose. His style is nervous, compact, sinuous, as good prose should be, which, as it is related, through its subject-matter, more responsibly to life than is poetry, must relinquish some of the fine abandonment of song, and find its compensation in a perfect blend, a perfect compromise of logic and rapture, truth and ideality. "I can conceive," says Flaubert, in one of his letters, "a style which should be beautiful ; which some one will write one of these days, in ten years or in ten centuries ; which shall be rhythmical as verse, precise as the language of science, and with undulations, modulations as of a violoncello, flashes of fire ; a style which would enter into the idea like the stroke of a stiletto ; a style on which our thoughts would sail over gleaming surfaces, as it were, in a boat with a good wind aft."

No better description, it seems to me, could be had of the musical style of Strauss, with its constant adaptation to the emotional and intellectual atmosphere of the moment, and its appropriateness to the realistic description of character and *milieu* which is his mission in music. His qualities are homogeneous ; he is not a Wagner *manqué* nor an illegitimate son of Liszt, but the creator of a new order of things in music, the founder of a new type of art. The only test of a literature being alive is, as Dr. Georg Brandes

says, whether it gives rise to new problems, new questionings. Judged by this test, the art of Strauss is the one sign of new and independent life in music since Wagner; for it perpetually spurs us on to the discussion of fresh problems of æsthetics, of psychology, and of form.

## V

Richard Strauss is the most intellectual of musicians. Saint-Saëns pointed out long ago the master part harmony would play in the music of the future, and Strauss realized the theory that melody is no longer sovereign in the kingdom of tone; his master works are architectural marvels. In structure, in rhythmical complexity, in striking harmonies, ugly, bold, brilliant, dissonantal, his symphonic poems are without parallel. Berlioz never dared, Liszt never invented, such miracles of polyphony, a polyphony beside which Wagner's is child's play and Bach's is outrivalled. And this learning, this titanic brushwork on vast and sombre canvases, are never for formal music's sake; indeed, one may ask if it is really music, and not a new art. It is always intended to mean something, say something, paint some one's soul; it is an attempt to make the old absolute music new and articulate. This flies in the face of Schopenhauer, who declared music to be a presentative, not a representative, art. In his gallery of psychological portraiture Strauss becomes a sort of musical Dostoïevsky. He

divines, Maeterlinck-like, the secret tragedy of existence, and paints with delicacy, with great barbaric masses, in colors that glow, poetic and legendary figures which yield up their souls to the psychological genius who questions them. I call the tendency of Strauss *décadent*, like Wagner's; both men build up their pictures by a multitude of infinitesimal touches; both men decompose their themes, — and this is the highest art of the decadence. Unity is sometimes absent, and also the power that makes for righteousness, which we find in Beethoven's music.

Touching on the moral of this new dispensation in art, I may confess that I am puzzled by its absolute departure from the ethic of Christianity. It is not precisely a pagan code that Strauss presents in his splendid laconic manner; rather is it the ethic of Spinoza ravished by the rhetoric of Nietzsche. Affirmation of the will, not its denial, is both preached and practised by this terrible composer. For him the ineluctable barrier of barriers is the return to simplicity, the return to the people. He may be simple in his complex way, and he may sympathize lyrically with the proletarian; yet he is the aristocrat of aristocrats in art; and his art, specialized, nervous, and alembicated, may be the call to arms of lonely, proud souls that refuse to go to the people as did Tolstoy. With Ibsen's Brand, not Tolstoy's, Levin is Strauss in closer

communion. And he may hold the twentieth century in his hand.

During his Italian trip Strauss wrote Aus Italien, opus 16, a symphonic fantasia that has been heard in America with delight. It is fresh, vigorous, even somewhat popular, in themes, and characteristically colored. The orchestration was the envy of the younger men. Italia was first given in Munich in 1887 under Strauss. His violin sonata, opus 18, was composed the same year. Then followed fast the series of daring orchestral frescos that placed the name of Strauss at the very forefront of living composers. And yet how un-German his music seems, hatched though it be from the very nest of the classics! Strauss is not of the same blood as the Vienna dance composers. He has written a valse; but who could compare the light, voluptuous Danube music to the ecstatic scarlet dance of the Overman in Also sprach Zarathustra! Despite the fact that it is preceded only by Italia, Macbeth, and Don Juan, Tod und Verklärung gives us *in esse* all the overpowering qualities of Strauss, chiefest of them being imagination without the ugliness detected by sensitive natures in later compositions. Death and Apotheosis is a masterpiece. The nineteenth century, notwithstanding its devotion to the material, produced poets and prose masters for whom death had a peculiar predilection. There is the mystic Maeterlinck,

with his sobbing shadowgraphs of Death the Intruder; Tolstoy, with his poignant picture of the Death of Ivan Illyitch; Arnold Böcklin, that Swiss master, who sang on elegiac canvas his Toten Insel; and have we not all read Walt Whitman in his matchless threnody "When lilacs last in the dooryard bloomed"? It is not strange, then, that Strauss, a lyric philosopher of the same passionate pattern as Friedrich Nietzsche, should wrestle with a problem as old as eternity. He does wrestle with it in his symphonic poem — attacking it in large symbolism, free from the morbidities of the decadent poets; accomplishes it in a way that wrings the very heartstrings.

It is the spectacle of a sick man in "a necessitous little chamber" reviewing his struggles and defeats as the fever cracks his veins and throttles his life. He has failed as failed Balzac's Louis Lambert, as fail all men with lofty ideals. He has reached that "squat tower" of defeat, death, which Robert Browning chanted in Childe Roland. To the dark tower he goes, and dauntless at the last, he sets the slughorn to his lips and blows victory in the very teeth of Death. Perhaps this most modern of poems gives the key to the Strauss music better than any other in the English tongue. The dying man sunken in lethargic slumber, his heart feebly beating in syncopated rhythms, recalls his childhood, his lusty youth, his mad passion

for life at its thickest. He toils and reaches summits only to hear the implacable Halt! of destiny. Yet he continues to combat Fate, but to be laid low. And dying, he triumphs; for his ideal lifts him to the heights, to "Sun-Smitten Sunium." He has dared, and daring conquers. The fable is old — as old as the Prometheus myth. In music we have it incarnated in Beethoven's Fifth Symphony, the tonality of which — C minor, C major — Strauss has adopted. Liszt, too, in his Tasso, a symphonic setting of Goethe's tragedy, attempted the same task, and accomplished it in a brilliant, spectacular fashion. The thematic grouping of the Strauss poem is simplicity itself when compared to the towering architectonics of A Hero's Life and Thus spake Zarathustra. After a lengthy prologue in which mood, atmosphere, *Stimmung* in a word, and echoes of childish babbling are subtly contrived, the bolt of destruction is let loose, and fever, a spectre, courses through the allegro. The Ideal motive sounds but in gasping, broken accents. It is only after the delirium has reached its climax that a period of repose, an analogy of the lyric period, is attained. The childhood of the man is lisped naïvely; youth and its frolicking unconsciousness are aptly portrayed; manly passion and conflict end the section, for the ominous Halt! is blared out by the trombones. The development — as in all developments of this composer — contains mira-

cles of counterpoint buried in passages of emotional splendor. With cumulative power and pathos we hear a climax of imposing sonorities; the marchlike motive of the Ideal is given in all its majesty, and in a C major of rainbow riches the poem finishes. Strauss has never surpassed the plangency of coloring, the melting sweetness of this score. He is more philosophic in Also sprach Zarathustra, more dramatic in Don Juan, more heroic in Ein Heldenleben; but never has his message been so consoling, never has he set so vividly over his orchestra the arc of promise. That such music came forth from his potent youth is a prophecy of an astounding future. He is the only living issue in music to-day; no other master has his stride, his stature.

That merry old rogue's tune, Till Eulenspiegel, is a scherzo-like rondo picturing the crazy pranks of the historic Tyll Owlglass. Its grotesque, passionate melancholy, tender violence, its streaks of broad humor interrupted by mocking pathos, its galloping down a narrow avenue, at the end of which looms the gibbet, its mockery of custom, flaunting of the Philistine, and the unrepentant death of Till, — make it a picture unparalleled in music literature. Scored brilliantly, the rondo leaves in its trail a whiff of sulphur and violets. It is fantastic music, fantastically conceived, fantastically executed.

The score of Also sprach Zarathustra is dated

"Begun February 4; finished August 24, 1896. Munich." The composer's words in this connection must be given: —

"I did not intend to write philosophical music or portray Nietzsche's great work musically. I meant to convey musically an idea of the development of the human race from its origin, through the various phases of development, religious as well as scientific, up to Nietzsche's idea of the Uebermensch."

Only a musical epitome of the creative processes of the cosmos! The modesty of Strauss is of a Michelangelo-like magnitude. This new Faust of music, Nietzsche-Strauss, who would assail the very stars in their courses, has written some pages in this opus that are of imposing grandeur. There is an uplifting roar at the opening, an effect of sunrise — purely imaginary all these musical pictures, yet none the less startling and credible — as Zarathustra's trumpets solemnly intone his motive. These tremendous chords in their naked simplicity alone proclaim Strauss a man of genius and give him fee simple to the symphonic heritage of Beethoven and Brahms. The A flat section is notably melodious and luscious in color. The five-voiced fugue is ugly yet masterful, and the dance music furious in its abandonment, corybantic in its revelry. Such laughter has never been heard in an orchestra. The melodic curve is passional. Strauss is here tender, dramatic, bizarre,

poetic, humorous, ironic, witty, wicked — simple never. The noble art of simplicity he lacks. This is the vastest and most difficult score ever penned. It is a cathedral in tone, sublime and fantastic, with its grotesque gargoyles, hideous flying abutments, exquisite traceries, prodigious arches, half gothic, half infernal, huge and resounding spaces, gorgeous façades, and heaven-splitting spires, — a mighty musical structure! We go to the rear-world, are in religious transports, are swept on the passional curves of that fascinating C minor theme "of Joys and Passions" and repelled by the fugal aspect of Science. There is "holy laughter" and dancing; the dancing of the midget, man, in the futile, furtive gleam of sunshine that bridges the Past and the Future with the Present. Then those twelve bell strokes — "deep eternity" is heard in the humming of the metal, and the close is of enigmatic tonality. Nothing as audacious was ever penned by the hand of man — in music.

The Nature theme is ingeniously designed It is, in the most natural of tonalities, C major, and consists of C, the fifth, and the octave above it. The third is missing out of the chord, and this makes the "tonal sex" of the chord variable. It is, says Merian, hermaphroditic, as is Nature itself. Major and minor are not yet divided. And the missing third makes this theme one of the World Riddle: "It is the sphinx Nature,

who is staring at us with empty, lustreless eyes, inviting confidence, yet awesome."

In the midst of the dancing orgy of joy sounds the bell of midnight. This is the final division, The Song of the Night Wanderer. Nietzsche, in the later editions of his book, gave this chapter the heading, The Drunken Song; and on the heavy strokes of the *Brummglocke* he wrote:—

ONE!
O man, take heed!
TWO!
What speaks the deep midnight?
THREE!
I have slept, I have slept—
FOUR!
I have awaked out of a deep dream—
FIVE!
The world is deep,
SIX!
And deeper than the day thought.
SEVEN!
Deep in its woe—
EIGHT!
Joy, deeper still than heart sorrow:
NINE!
Woe speaks: Vanish!
TEN!
Yet all joy wants eternity—
ELEVEN!
Wants deep, deep eternity!
TWELVE!

But Strauss chooses this symbol as the time when Zarathustra begins his journey into eternity. The hour of midnight is the hour of death, the goal of Zarathustra's career. This episode is an emotional parallel to the period when Zarathustra is felled to earth with conflicting longings. And the Theme of Disgust here stands forth as the Motif of Death, controlling the scene. Zarathustra's earthly death is wonderfully translated into tone. The Theme of Death struggles with that of earthly strife, and both succumb in a broken chord of C major. Then without any modulation the Theme of the Ideal sounds in B major and the transfiguration is achieved. Again there is a faint reminiscent plea of the conquered themes. The Theme of the Ideal sways aloft in the higher regions in B major; the trombones insist on the cryptic unresolved chord of C-E-F sharp; and in the double basses and celli is repeated C-G-C — the World Riddle. Emil Paur, ever an ardent Strauss pioneer, produced Also sprach Zarathustra in New York, December, 1897.

In W. B. Yeats's Ideas of Good and Evil, there appears this characteristic passage: "Have not poetry and music arisen, as it seems, out of the sounds the enchanters made to help their imagination to enchant, to charm, to bind with a spell themselves and the passers-by? These very words, a chief part of all praises of music or poetry, still cry to us their origin." The

Irish mystic poet is writing of magic, and I cannot help applying his words to Richard Strauss, who is the initiator of new art. After hearing his Till Eulenspiegel conducted by the composer, I was more than ever impressed by the idea that Strauss is diverting music into psychologic channels, moulding its plastic forms into shapes that are really vital, so intense is their personal appeal. Since primitive man howled his lays to the moon, the art of music has become in every age more and more definitive; even the classic masters were not content to play alone with tonal arabesques, but sought to impress upon their bars a definite mood. In Beethoven the passion for articulating his meanings literally re-created music. When Wagner found that he had nothing new to say, he resorted to an old device — he wedded his music to words. Richard Strauss has now taken up the chain, the last links of which were so patiently forged by Franz Liszt. He has at his command all the old enchantments of music; he can woo and ravish the ear and command the tempests; but this is not enough. He would have his message still more articulate. He is a thinker, a philosopher as well as a poet, and deeply religious in the cosmical sense; he purposes no less a task than the complete subjugation of men's imagination. Notes, phrases, groups, movements, masses of tone are no longer merely sensuous symbols, but the actual

symbols of a language; we must hasten to learn the new speech, which relates in wonderful tones wonderful things. Tschaïkowsky aimed at this definiteness, but his passionate, emotional nature clouded the workings of his intellect. Strauss, too, has had the seven devils of sensuality in his mansion, but has exorcised them by sheer force of a great spiritual nature — the man is a spiritualist, a seer in the broader meanings of these much-worn terms. The vision of approaching death in his Don Quixote could have been conceived only by one for whom life and the universe itself were symbols, the living garment by which we apprehend the Deity.

In our shrewd categories of things intellectual and things emotional, we partition off too sharply brain and feeling, soul and body. Life is not a proposition by Euclid; nor is art. It is one of the functions of music to make us feel, another to make us think; the greatest masters are ever those who make us both feel and think in one vivid moment. This Beethoven has done, Wagner has done, and now Richard Strauss. You cannot call his music frigidly intellectual, as is often the music of Brahms, nor does it relapse into such debauches of frenetic passion as Tschaïkowsky's — the imperial intellect of Strauss controls his temperament. He is, like Nietzsche, a lyric philosopher, but never, like Nietzsche, will he allow the problems of life and art to overthrow his reason. In the thunders

of his scores, I seem to hear the annunciation of a new dispensation, of a new evangel of art which shall preach the beauty of the soul and the beauty of body; life on the other side of good and evil.

There are many to whom Richard Strauss's tone-poem Ein Heldenleben proved musically baneful. Yet Strauss wears no mask. His own musical lineaments, convulsed in passion's grimace, exultant with grandiose dreams, or distorted by deadly rage, are the naked expression of his fantastic soul. And to the orthodox his contempt for clear tonalities, his mockery of the very harmonic foundations of the art, his juggling with bizzare rhythms — in a word, his avoidance of the normal, the facile, the smug, and the unoriginal, is as great a crime against ethics as the lucidly insane proclamations of the Master Immoralist, Friedrich Nietzsche. Repeated hearings convince one regarding Strauss's sincerity. He is working out his own artistic salvation on his own premeditated lines. He is the solitary soul of Hauptmann, and he is doomed to mockery until he is understood.

It is impossible to escape the compelling magnetism of the man from Munich. He is still young, still in his storm and stress period. When the time for clarification comes, Strauss in this final analysis will emerge a very big man. His Hero's Life has its ugly spots —

critics and criticism are objectified in a cruelly sardonic fashion — and that battlefield will remain for this generation either sheer brutal noise or else the forefront of the higher æstheticism in music. One way or the other it matters little; the reputation of Strauss will not stand or fall by this poem. The main thing to record is the overwhelming impression of power, anarchistic if you will, that informs Ein Heldenleben. And all the more disquieting is the discovery that this Wizard of Dreams wears no antique musical mask — his own is tragic and significant enough.

And let it be said that for conventional programme music Strauss has ever manifested a violent aversion. The only clew he gives to his work is the title. Some commentators do the most mischief, for they read into this music every imaginable meaning. It is then as absolute music that Ein Heldenleben may be criticised, though the names of the various subdivisions give the hearer, if not a key, at least notion of the emotional trend of this composition. This is the way Richard Strauss has outlined the scheme of his E flat Symphony, opus 40, his Eroica:—

I. The Hero. II. The Hero's Antagonists. III. The Hero's Consort. IV. The Hero's Battlefield. V. The Hero's Work of Peace. VI. The Hero's Retirement from Worldly Life and Strife and Ultimate Perfection. It must

be remembered that this is a purely arbitrary arrangement, for in the formal sense the ground plan of the symphony would be thus: The first three sections contain the thematic statements; the next two — parts four and five — are devoted to the exposition or free fantasia; the last is a highly elaborate summing up or coda. Here is the symphonic form in an attenuated shape, the chief novelty being the introduction in part five — or second division of the working-out section of new thematic material, modest quotations from the Strauss earlier symphonic works. There can then be no doubt as to the identity of the protagonist of this drama-symphony — it is the glorified image of Richard Strauss. This latter exploitation of personality need not distress us unnecessarily; Strauss but follows in the footsteps of Walt Whitman and of his own contemporaries — Rodin, the sculptor; Gabriel d'Annunzio, in Il Fuoco; Nietzsche, in Zarathustra; Tolstoy, in all his confessions — despite their inverted humility; Wagner, in Meistersinger; Franz Stuck, the Munich painter, whose portrait of his own eccentric self is not the least of his work. Strauss might appreciatively quote Walt Whitman: "Am I of mighty Manhattan the son?" as a justification of what paradoxically could be called his objective egotism. But the composer not only deifies the normal man, he shadows forth Nietzsche's supernormal humanity. He is a very Victor

Hugo in his colossal egotism, yet he names it the ego of mankind. So avoiding all this pother of philosophy and æsthetics, one is forced to return to the music as poetic music.

The Hero theme is Beethovian in its diatonic majesty — the entire section has a Beethoven color, despite its dissonantal interruptions — while the second section, an amiable picture of the composer's adversaries, suggests in a triturated manner the irony, caricature, and burlesque spirit of Till Eulenspiegel. His critical adversaries are represented as a snarling, sorry crew, with acrid and acrimonious souls, duly set forth by the woodwind instruments, chiefly the oboe; there is also a horrid sounding phrase, empty fifths for tenor and bass tuba. Then the hero's wife is pictured by the solo violin. It is very feminine. It mounts in passion and interest with the duologue. After that — chaos! It is but the developing of the foregoing motives. And such an exposition, it is safe to say, has never been heard since saurians roared in the steaming marshes of the young planet, or when prehistoric man met in multitudinous and shrieking combat. Yet the web is polyphonically spun — spun magnificently. This battle scene is full of unmitigated horror. One knows that it is the free fantasia, but such a one has never been conceived before by the mind of man. A battle is not a peaceful or a pleasant place, especially a modern battlefield. You

can dimly, after several hearings, thread the thematic mazes, but so discordant are the opposing tonalities, so screaming the harmonies, and so highly pitched the dynamic scheme, that the normal ear, thus rudely assaulted, becomes bewildered and finally insensitive. Strauss has not a normal ear. His is the most marvelous agglomeration of cortical cells that science has ever recorded. So acute are his powers of acoustical differentiation that he must hear, not alone tones beyond the base and the top of the normal scale unheard of by ordinary humans, but he must also hear, or, rather, overhear, the vibratory waves from all individual sounds. His music gives us the impression of new overtones, of scales that violate the well tempered, of tonalities that approximate to the quarter-tones of Oriental music. And yet there is, besides the barbaric energy displayed, grandeur in the conception of this extraordinary battle piece. It evokes the picture of countless and waging hosts; of forests of waving spears and clashing blades. The din, heat, and turmoil of conflict are spread over all and the ground piled high with the slain.

It is all too intricate to grasp at several hearings, though it may become child's play for the next generation. Richard Wagner's case must not be forgotten at this point. So complex is the counterpoint of Strauss that one of his commentators recommends the all but impos-

sible feat of listening to it horizontally and vertically. In the fifth part we hear themes from the composer's Don Juan, Macbeth, Death and Apotheosis, Till Eulenspiegel, Zarathustra, Don Quixote, Guntram, and his lovely song, Traum durch die Dämmerung. With the coda, after some sinister retrospection of an agitated life, comes peace, pastoral, soul-renewing. And the big E flat chord that closes the volume is worth the entire composition. It is the most magnificent and imposing rainbow of tone that ever spanned the harmonic heavens. Not Wagner's wonderful C major chord, which begins the Meistersinger overture, is comparable to the iridescence of this *Uebermensch's* sonorous valedictory. Strauss has not hesitated to annex some themes from Parsifal and Tristan; there is, indeed, much Wagner in the score. But do not call this man a madman, a *décadent* — unless by *décadent* you mean the expression in its literary sense as in an undue devotion to the letter at the expense of the word, phrase, sentence, paragraph, page, chapter, and book. He has great energy, great power of concentration; and his critics — those he so caustically portrays as snarling and cynical in his very Till-Eulenspiegel-like second section — those critics, we repeat, must admit the man's skill in scoring, in contrapuntal mastery. Whether all this monumental labor is worth the trouble; whether the very noticeable disproportion — spiritual and

physical — between the themes and their handling; whether these things are to defy established canonic conventions and live by virtue of their characteristic truth and tonal beauty, — are considerations I gratefully relinquish to the next generation. Naturally there is repellent music in the score; but then the neo-realists insist on truth, not on the pursuit of vague and decorative beauty. It is the characteristic *versus* the ornamental; and who shall dare predict its future success or extinction? One thing must be insisted upon — the absolute abandonment of the old musical ideal, else Strauss and his tendencies go by the board. The well-sounding, the poetic, — in the romantic sense, — are thrown to the winds in this monstrous orgy; an organized orgy in the Balzac meaning of the phrase — for Strauss is only mad north-northwest, and can always tell a harmonic hawk from a hernshaw. In his most delirious moments he remembers his orchestral palette. And what a gorgeous, horrible color scheme is his! He has a taste for sour progressions, and every voice in his orchestral family is forced to sing impossible and wicked things. He owes much to Beethoven, Berlioz, Liszt, and Wagner, — the Wagner of Tristan and Parsifal, — and often he compasses both beauty and grandeur.

The Strauss tone-poems are dramas without words. What Tschaïkowsky so eloquently exe-

cuted as single figures in the character studies of Romeo and Juliet, Francesca da Rimini, Hamlet, and Manfred, Richard Strauss expands to the compass of a psychical tonal drama, dispensing with words, with actions, with the machinery of the stage, just as the great masters of fiction supplanted the makers of epics and their supernatural furniture by a synthesis in which action, dialogue, description, comment, are melted into homogeneous narrative. Every instrument in the Strauss orchestra is an actor that speaks its lines solo or during an amazing polyphony. After Don Quixote one need not be told that Strauss is not a mere Tintoretto of the orchestra; he is, I am not loath to repeat, both painter and psychologist. As the greatest narrator in modern prose is Gustave Flaubert, so Richard Strauss is the greatest of musical narrators. There is no longer any question of form in the classic sense; every music symbol and device hitherto known in the art of music is utilized and reënforced by the invention of numberless methods for driving home to the imagination the Old-World tale of Don Quixote and his squire. It may be objected here that the story of Cervantes should suffice without any of the sonorous exfoliations of this composer. Very true. But Strauss only uses Don Quixote as he uses Zarathustra or Don Juan, as a type of something that may be discovered in all humanity. Don Quixote the perfect dreamer may be the Knight of Cer-

vantes or our next-door neighbor. More terrible still, he may be our true self masked by the dull garb of life's quotidian struggle for bread! And to offset the fantasy of the knight we have the homely wisdom of Sancho Panza, who, having barked his shins as well as warmed them at the grate of life, always speaks by the card. A sensible fool, he is not understood by the foolish sensitivist, the poet who looks aloft and therefore misses the prizes beloved of most men.

Why is not this a theme fit for musical development? It has every element dear to the heart of the poetic composer — fantasy, poetry, broad, obvious humor, realism, nobility of idea, and an almost infinite number of surfaces fit for the loving brush of a master painter. Then there is the psychology. Don Quixote, half-mad, chivalric withal, must be depicted; as a counterfoil the obese humors of Sancho Panza are ready for celebration. After subjecting this pair to the minutest musical scrutiny, their voyages and adventures must be duly set forth. It is evident that here we are confronted by many difficulties. It is no longer a question of mere musicianship. Form is a thing of the grammarians, to be discussed behind closed doors by persons who believe in musty counterpoint and the rules of the game. A great vital imagination, defying alike gods and men and capable of shaping his dreams, a man of humor, malice, irony, above all else irony, tenderness, pity, and the marrow

of life, love, — all these qualities, plus an infernal (or celestial if you like the word better) science, must the composer of a Don Quixote possess.

Strauss calls his work "Fantastic variations on a theme, of knightly character." For the benefit of the musically pious let me add that it is in the form — broadly — of a Thema con Variazione and Finale. Therein Strauss may be said to mock his own idealism, as Heine and Nietzsche once mocked theirs. The realism is after all a realism of fantasy; for the narrative deals with what the Knight of the Rueful Countenance imagined and with what his trusty squire thought of him. With his characteristic *flair* for an apt subject, Strauss recognized in the semi-dream-life of Don Quixote a theme pat for treatment — and how he has treated it! That magnificent gift of irony, inherent in every sentence he utters, here expands in a soil worthy of it. A garden of curious and beautiful flowers — flowers of evil as well as good — blooms in this score. Its close contains some affecting and noble pages, as affecting as Tschaïkowsky's, as dignified and dramatic as Richard Wagner's. There is no interruption in the different sections. Don Quixote is "enacted" by the solo violoncello, the viola represents Sancho Panza. (Perhaps Strauss indulged in a sly witticism at the expense of the romantic Berlioz and his viola solo in Harold in Italy.) We first see — some hear, others see — Don Quixote reading crack-

brained romances of chivalry. There are themes grandiose, mock heroic and crazy in their gallantry. Queer harmonies from time to time indicate the profound mental disturbance of the knight. He envisages the ideal woman; giants attack her; he rushes to the rescue. The muting of the instruments, tuba included, produces the idea of slow-creeping madness and a turbulent comminglement of ideas. Suddenly his reason goes, and with a crazy *glissando* on the harps and a mutilated version of the knightly theme the unfortunate man becomes quite mad. From music to madness is but a step after all. Don Quixote is now Knight Errant.

Then follows, after a new theme rich in characterization, the theme of Sancho Panza, for the bass clarinet and bass tuba; later always on the viola. The fat shoulders, big paunch, the mean, good-natured, lying, gluttonous, constant fellow are limned with the startling fidelity that Gustave Doré or Daniel Vièrge attained — for music can give the sense of motion; it is par excellence the art of narration.

The ten variations which ensue are masterpieces. We no longer ask for the normal eight-bar euphonious melody, for the equable distribution of harmonies, for order, rhythm, mass, and logic; but, with suspense unconcealed, follow the line of the story, amazed, delighted, perplexed, angered, piqued, interested — always interested by the magic of the narrator. The

adventure with the windmills; the victorious battle against the host of the great emperor Alifanfaron; dialogues of Knight and Squire; the meeting with the Penitents and the Knight's overthrow; his vigil; the encounter with his Dulcinea; the ride through the air; the journey in the enchanted boat; the conflict with the two magicians; the combat with the Knight of the Silver Moon; and the overthrow of Don Quixote and his death, — are so many canvases upon which are painted with subtle, broad, ironic, and naïve colors the memorable history heretofore hinted at. The realistic effects, notably the use of the wind machine in Variation VII, are not distasteful. Muted brass in Variation II suggests the plaintive *m-a-a-h-s* of a herd of sheep. The grunting of pigs, crowing of roosters, roaring of lions, and hissing of snakes were crudely imitated by the classic masters; while in the Wagner music-dramas may be discovered quite a zoölogical collection. Nor is the wind machine so formidable as it is said to be. It is an effect utilized to represent the imaginary flight through the air in a wild gale of Knight and Squire on a wooden Pegasus. We know that it is pure imagination, for the growling tremolo of the double basses on one note tells the listener that the solid earth has really never been abandoned.

Throughout, there are many ravishing touches of tenderness, of sincere romance; and the finale

is very pathetic. His reason returns — wonderfully described — and the poor, lovable Knight, recognizing his aberration, passes gently away. Here Strauss utilizes a device as old as the hills, and one heard in the B minor symphony of Tschaïkowsky. It is sort of a *basso ostinato*, the *tympani* obstinately tapping a tone as the soul of the much-tried man takes flight. Perhaps the accents of a deep-seated pessimism may be overheard here — for I believe Richard Strauss too great a nature to remain content with his successes. He recalls to me in this poem the little mezzotint of John Martin, where Sadak in search of the waters of oblivion painfully creeps over the cruel edges of terrifying abysses to misty heights, upon which still more appalling dangers await the intrepid soul.

Strauss has only reached the midway of his mortal life. A stylist, a realist in his treatment of his orchestral hosts, a psychologist among psychologists, a master of a new and generous culture, a thinker, above all an interpreter of poetic and heroic types of humanity, who shall say to him: Dare no further! His audacity is only equalled by his mental serenity. In all the fury of his fantasy his intelligence is sovereign over its kingdom.

## II

# PARSIFAL: A MYSTIC MELO-DRAMA

I will open my dark saying upon the harp.
— PSALM XLIX.

WHEN a certain famous Wagner conductor was in New York not long ago, he related to musical friends an astonishing story. He had seen, he declared, the manuscript autobiography of Richard Wagner at Wahnfried, in Bayreuth, which is to remain unpublished until the expiration of a certain period. This conductor did not hesitate to clear up a mystery that, nevertheless, has been an open secret in Germany for many years — Wagner's parentage. The conductor said that Wagner admitted he was the son of Ludwig Geyer. Ludwig Geyer, painter, poet, dramatist, composer, actor, stage manager, — a versatile man in everything, — was of Hebraic ancestry. Wagner, therefore, had a moiety of the blood, and his son Siegfried more than his father, for Cosima Liszt (von Bülow) Wagner's maternal grandparents were the Jewish bankers Bethmann of Frankfort-on-the-Main. Mr. Henry T. Finck — whose Wagner biography still re-

mains the standard one in the language — once remarked upon the fact that at Wahnfried, Bayreuth, the pictures of Wagner's mother and Ludwig Geyer may be seen, but that of his reputed father is not on view. Nietzsche, often a prejudiced witness when his antipathies are aroused, wrote: "Was Wagner German at all? We have some reasons for asking this. It is difficult to discern in him any German trait whatsoever. Being a great learner, he has learned to imitate much that is German — that is all. His character itself is in opposition to what has been hitherto regarded as German — not to speak of the German musician! His father was a stage player named Geyer. A Geyer is almost an Adler — Geyer and Adler are both names of Jewish families." The above was written about 1887–1888. Setting aside the statement that Wagner was un-German as meaningless, — men of genius are generally strangers to their nation, — the other assertion only shows that Nietzsche was in possession of the secret. He was an intimate of the Wagner household and knew its history.

And what does this prove? Only that the genius of Richard Wagner, tinctured with Oriental blood, betrayed itself in the magnificence of his pictorial imagination, in the splendor of his music, in its color, glow, warmth, and rhythmic intensity. It also accounts for his pertinacity, his dislike of Meyerbeer and Heine

and Mendelssohn. He was essentially a man of the theatre, as was Meyerbeer, though loftier in his aims, while not so gifted melodically. In sooth, he owes much to the Meyerbeer opera and the Scribe libretto, — Scribe, who really constructed one of the first viable dramatic books — withal old-fashioned — for musical setting.

And nothing is more useless than to pin Wagner down to his every utterance in poem or speech. As Bernard Shaw has acutely pointed out, Wagner — versatile, mercurial, wonderful Wagner — was a different being every hour of the day. He explained matters to suit his mood of the moment, — a Schopenhauerian one hour, a semi-Christian the next. Liszt, Glasenapp, Heckel, Feustel, all show different portraits of this man. A German democrat he was — and a courtier, an atheist, and yet a mystic. Wagner was all things to all men, like men of his supple imagination.

He abused conductors for playing excerpts from his music in concert, and then conducted concerts devoted to his own works. He wrote pamphlets on every subject, and with the prerogative of genius contradicted them in other pamphlets. He was not always a Wagnerian, and at times he differed with himself in the interpretation of his compositions. He was a genius beset by volatile moods, a very busy man of affairs, and a much-suffering creature. Wandering about the world for a half-century

did not improve his temper, and yet next to Nietzsche there is no one whose judgments on Wagner's music I would regard with more suspicion than—Richard Wagner's. He was a born satirist. He loved to play practical jokes, and it would not be surprising if some day we should learn that Parsifal was one of his jokes on an epical scale. Remember how he mocked Mozart and Beethoven and the symphonic form in his own C major symphony, as if to say, "I, too, can cover the symphonic canvas!" No, Wagner is a dangerous authority to quote upon Wagner.

Though Liszt was only two years older than Wagner, he was a musician of experience when Wagner was still a youth. While at the age of eighteen Wagner published his first sonata, opus 1, which was written under the direct influence of Haydn and Mozart, Liszt at the same age had already sketched a great revolutionary symphony, the slow movement of which, on Liszt's own showing, has survived in his eighth symphonic poem, Héröïde Funèbre. By reference to these two early works, it is easy to determine which of these two masters was the first to open up new paths. Similarly we find that, during the Rienzi period, Liszt had already adopted new forms for his compositions of that date. In Wagner's later works there often appear themes which note for note have been anticipated by Liszt. Compare, for their thematic formation, musical construction, and general

coloring, Orpheus and Tristan and Isolde, the Faust symphony and Tristan, the Faust symphony and Die Walküre, Benediction de Dieu dans le Solitude and Isolde's Liebestod, Die Ideale and the Ring, — Das Rheingold in particular, — Invocation and Parsifal, Hunnenschlact and Kundry-Ritt, The Legend of Saint Elizabeth and Parsifal, Christus and Parsifal, Excelsior and Parsifal, not to mention many others.

The principal theme of the Faust symphony is to be found in Die Walküre, and one of its most characteristic themes appears note for note as the *Blick* motive in Tristan and Isolde. The Gretchen motive in Wagner's A Faust Overture is also derived from Liszt, and the opening theme of the Parsifal prelude closely follows the earlier written Excelsior of Liszt. It was during a rehearsal at Bayreuth in 1876 that Wagner suddenly seized Liszt by the arm and exclaimed, "Now, papa, here comes a theme which I got from you!" "All right," replied the amiable Liszt, "one will then at least hear it." The theme in question is the one in the fifth scene of the second act, which serves to introduce and accompany Sieglinde's dream-words, "Kehrte der Vater nun heim?" This theme — see page 179 of Kleinmichael's piano score — appears at the beginning of Liszt's Faust symphony, which Wagner had heard at a festival of the Allgemeiner Deutscher Musik Verein in 1861, and during which he burst forth

with these words, "Music furnishes us with much that is beautiful and sublime; but *this* music is divinely beautiful." Wagner owed much to Liszt besides money, sympathy, and a wife.

Even in the matter of the Niebelungenlied Wagner was anticipated by Friedrich Hebbel, whose somewhat prosaic dramatic version was first given at Weimar, in the Grand Ducal Theatre, May 16, 1861. The author's wife, a well-known actress, essayed the principal rôle. A critic said of this Trilogy, "No one hitherto has collated the whole dramatic treasure of the Niebelung legends and made it playable upon the modern stage." Yet, who to-day remembers Hebbel, and who does not know Wagner's Trilogy?

But this indebtedness of one genius to another is often sadly misinterpreted. Handel helped himself, in his accustomed royal manner, to what he liked, and the tunes of many composers whose names are long since forgotten are preserved in his scenes like flies in amber. Shakespeare did not hesitate to appropriate from Plutarch and Montaigne, from Bandello and Holinshed, — yet he remains Shakespeare. Wagner, perhaps, was not cautious; and Liszt is too important a composer to have been thus treated, too important, and also too much of a contemporary. Why should we cavil? Wagner made good use of his borrowings, and it is in their

individual handling and development that he still remains Richard Wagner.

Richard Strauss once said: "How necessary to every composer who writes for orchestra the contact with that body is, I will show you in one example. It is well known that when Wagner conducted for the first time Lohengrin, many years after its completion, he exclaimed, 'Too much brass!' In his exile he also wrote Tristan and Isolde, a tone-poem which makes over-great demands upon the orchestra and the singers. Parsifal, however, he wrote at Bayreuth. He had regained intimate feeling again with the orchestra and the stage. Hence I recognize in Parsifal a model of instrumental reserve."

This quite bears out Arthur Symons's contention that the best way to study a great artist is in the works of his decline, when his invention is on the wane. Another thing, and this should settle the controversy over that much discussed phrase, "Bühnenweihfestspiel," Hanslick, Wagner's heartiest opponent, wrote in 1882: "I must say at once that the ecclesiastic scenes in Parsifal did not at the performance produce nearly as offensive an effect as they do on one who merely reads the text-book. The actions we see are of a religious character, but with all their dignified solemnity they are nevertheless not in the style of the church, but entirely in the operatic style. Parsifal is and

remains an opera, even though it be called a Bühnenweihfestspiel."

Touching on the acrimonious controversy over Parsifal's blasphemy, I may only say — to every one their belief. No one is forced to see the melodrama, for a mystic melodrama it is, with the original connotations of the phrase. The entire work is such a jumble of creeds that future Bauers, Harnacks, Delitzsches, and other ethical archæologists will have a terrible task if the work is taken for a relic of some tribal form of worship among the barbarians of the then remote nineteenth century. Here in America, the Land of the Almighty Hysteria, this artificial medley of faded music and grotesque forms is sufficiently eclectic in character to set tripping the feet of them that go forth upon the mountains in search of new, half-baked religions.

And now to a complete analysis of the work, an analysis, be it said, first made at Bayreuth in August, 1901. That it may prove unpleasant reading for some I do not doubt. I only hope that I shall not be accused of artistic irreverence. The personal equation counts for something in criticism. I cannot admire Parsifal, and I am giving my reasons for this dislike. There is no reason why the criticism that has so royally acclaimed the beauty of Wagner's other music-dramas should be suspected in the case of Parsifal. Why should Parsifal be hedged as if of

"sacred character"? If you tell a Parsifalite that the opera is blasphemous, he proves volubly, ingeniously, that it is pure symbolism, that Saracenic, Buddhistic, any but Christian, ceremonial is employed. But if you turn the tables, and assert that Parsifal is not sacred, that it should be enjoyed and criticised like Tristan and Isolde, the Parsifalite quickly jumps the track and exclaims, "Sir, there is sacred atmosphere in Parsifal, and not in Tristan!" Oh, this sacred atmosphere! It is worse than Nietzsche's Holy Laughter! The question may be summed up thus: If Parsifal is blasphemous, it should not be tolerated; if it is not a representation of sacred matter, then we have the privilege of criticising it as we do a Verdi or a Meyerbeer opera; and Meyerbeer was an inveterate mocker of religious things — witness Les Huguenots, Robert le Diable, Le Prophète. How about Halévy's La Juive? Parsifal, so it appears to me, is more morbid than blasphemous.

Ready-made admiration is dangerous. It behooves us to study Parsifal for ourselves, and not accept as gospel the uncritical enthusiasms of the Wagnerite who is without a sense of the eternal fitness of things. One ounce of humor, of common sense, puts to flight the sham ethical and the sham æsthetical of the Parsifal worshippers. And level-headed study should prove of profit. The composition is a miracle of polyphonic

architecture — and it is also the weakest that its creator ever planned.

### PARSIFAL

Parsifal a vaincu les filles, leur gentil
  Babil et la luxure amusante et sa pente
  Vers la chair de garçon vierge que cela tente
D'aimer les seins légers et ce gentil babil.

  Il a vaincu la femme belle au cœur subtil
Etalant ces bras frais et sa gorge excitante;
Il a vaincu l'enfer, et rentre dans sa tente
  Avec un lourd trophée à son bras puéril.

Avec la lance qui perça le flanc suprême!
Il a guéri le roi, le voici roi lui-même
Et prêtre du très-saint trésor essentiel;

En robe d'or il adore, gloire et symbole,
  Le vase pur où resplendit le sang réel,
— Et, o ces voix d'enfants chantant dans la coupole.

—Paul Verlaine.

## I

### THE BOOK

Parsifal was published in book form on December 25, 1877. The first act was completed during the winter of 1877–1878, and the instrumentation of the prelude finished by December 25, 1878. The spring and summer of 1878 were devoted to the second act, a sketch of which was prepared October 11 of the same

year. The third act was finished by April 25, 1879, and from 1878 to 1882 the gigantic task of orchestration was undertaken. In the copying of this Wagner was assisted by the late Anton Seidl and Engelbert Humperdinck. The entire first act was not completed until the spring of 1880. In a villa near Naples he finished the second act, with its garden scene; and in Palermo, January 13, 1882, the sacred music-drama was given its final form. July 28 of the same year Parsifal was first performed at Bayreuth, with Materna as Kundry, Winklemann as Parsifal, Reichmann as Amfortas; Kindermann sang the phrases allotted to Titurel, and Scaria was Gurnemanz. The Klingsor was Karl Hill. Hermann Levi conducted. Thus much for dry statistics.

"Besides my Siegfried," Wagner wrote August 9, 1849, to Uhlig, "I have in my mind two tragic and two comic subjects; but not one of them seems to me to be suitable for the French stage. I have just found a fifth one; it is indifferent to me in what language it will appear first; it is Jesus of Nazareth. I have the intention to offer it to the French and thus to get rid of the whole affair, for I foresee the indignation this project will excite in my collaborator." Wagner's plan was to make a play in which Christ would be tempted by Mary Magdalen. This idea was abandoned. With the conception of Tristan and Isolde came the scheme for a

Parsifal. He wrote of this to Liszt in 1876, being full of Schopenhauer and Buddhism at the time. The Victors was the sketch found among his papers, the hero of which is the Eastern prince Ananda, who rejects the love of the beautiful Princess Prakriti, and by this act of renunciation achieves his and the woman's redemption. Parsifal is not far removed from this sketch. In 1857 near Zurich Wagner became obsessed by the idea, and on a Good Friday the genesis of Parsifal occurred. In 1864 this sketch, at the request of Ludwig II, was carefully developed, and became the complete music-drama.

Wagner has rooted his story in the old legends and history of Wolfram von Eschenbach and Chrétien de Troies. The latter wrote his poem in 1175, Perceval the Gaul; or, the Story of the Grail; the former was composed between 1201 and 1210. But the story was centuries old before Chrétien handled it, its origin probably being Provençal. And before that it may have sprung from the Moorish, from the Egyptian, from the Indian, from the very beginnings of literature, for it is but the old story of might warring against right, evil attempting to seduce good. It crops out in a modified form in the Arthurian cycle, for the Round Table and the Grail are united in one. Whether Perceval, Parzival, or Parsifal, we find the guileless young hero fighting against wrong and resisting evil. There

is even a Romance of Peredur to be found in the Mabinogion or Red Book, a collection of Welsh romances. Some believe this Peredur to be the prototype of the French Perceval. In all these poems there is a Kundry, or Kondrie, or Orgeleuse, a sorceress; and a King who has sinned — Le Roi Pécheur. The Knighthood of the Grail is a consecrated community that worships the sang-real, the precious blood of Jesus Christ, which some say was caught up in a goblet after the soldier Longinus pierced the side of the Saviour on Calvary. This lance also plays an important part in the poems, and in Wagner's music-drama. Montsalvat is a beautiful temple in a far-away land — presumably Spain — where the knights of the Grail, or Graal, meet to receive spiritual nourishment from the holy chalice containing God's blood. Every year a white dove descends from heaven to lend new powers and strength to the miraculous vase inclosing the blood. These knights are vowed to chastity, and it was a sin against chastity committed by Amfortas that caused the monarch all his suffering. Kundry it was who tempted the King. Klingsor, the enchanter, a eunuch by his own act, prompts Kundry to all this evil. Gurnemanz, the aged servitor of the Grail, and Titurel, the dead King, though miraculously alive, father of Amfortas, make up the rest of the characters in this strange drama of pity and renunciation.

Wagner saw many opportunities in the legends and poems, and as was his wont synthesized them in the shape we know as Parsifal. His Parsifal is a born innocent, a pure fool. Wagner pretended to derive the word from Parsi-fal or Fal-Parsi — *i.e.* Pure Fool — born after the death of his father, Gamuret, and living alone with his mother, Herzeleide, in the woods. Attracted by a cavalcade of shining knights he follows it and finally enters the domain of the Grail. Let us leave him there and consider that curious composition of the poet-musician — Kundry. Wagner found some of her characteristics in the old poems, but to him belongs the credit of creating the woman we see in his drama. She is Kundry the enchantress, Herodias, who laughed at Christ, who had John the Baptist beheaded — "she is said to have laughed when she bore aloft the head," and it breathed upon her, thus condemning her to eternal wandering. Besides this, Kundry is also Gundryggia of the Northern nymphs, the slaying Valkyr. A type of the eternal temptress, and yet a Magdalen, Wagner calls her the Rose of Hell, the She Devil, a tempestuous spirit, a perpetual seducer. She is under Klingsor's rule, though she humbly serves the Grail Knights in their estate when she is not asleep. Asleep, Klingsor can summon her as he wills, and then, instead of the Beneficent Kundry, she becomes the Demon Kundry.

Now follows the story of Richard Wagner's Parsifal, which I condense with the help of Maurice Kufferath's version and from the epitomes of von Wolzogen, Albert Heintz, and many others. It is assumed before the curtain rises that the spectator is acquainted with the tale of the foolish lad Parsifal and his roaming in the forest, bow and arrow in hand, in pursuit of the "shining men mounted upon noble steeds." He loses his way and enters the region of the Grail. At this point the curtains part and we see a deep wood in a mountainous district. The book of the play tells us of the scene of action: "The domains and Castle Montsalvat of the Guardian of the Grail, with scenery characteristic of the northern mountains of Gothic Spain. Later Klingsor's enchanted castle on a southern slope of the same mountains, looking toward Moorish Spain." The scene in Act I represents a clearing upon the border of a beautiful lake. It is morning. Stretched in slumber upon the ground are Gurnemanz, a pious, hale old servant of the Grail, and two squires. Brass music awakens them, and after prayer they prepare to attend the King Amfortas, who is at the very moment approaching the lake for his bath — he suffers cruelly from his wound. Two knights appear and inform the others of this suffering. The balsam of Gawain is without effect. Suddenly there appears on the edge of the forest a terrible figure. It is Kundry. Wagner thus

indicates her appearance: "in wild garb fastened high with a hanging girdle of snakes' skins; black hair, flowing in loose tresses; dark brown, reddish complexion, piercing black eyes, at times flaming wildly, but oftener fixed as in death." She brings from Arabia a balsam to soothe the King's pain. Enter Amfortas. He seeks the cool of the forest after his night of agony. The lake, too, will give him some surcease to his pain. But Gurnemanz knows better: "But One thing helpeth — One the helper," he mutters. Amfortas repeats the prophecy that once in letters of fire appeared about the rim of the Grail vase: "Durch Mitleid wissend, der reine Thor, harre sein, den ich erkor;" that is, "By pity waken'd the blameless Fool, him await my chosen tool." The King longs for death. Kundry offers him the balsam. "Of what use the balm? All is useless; rather a bath in the waters of the lake." The litter bearing the royal sufferer moves sadly and slowly away, while Kundry crouches down like a hunted wild animal. The squires tease her until Gurnemanz recalls to them that even beasts are sacred within the territory of the Grail. Then follows a long recital by the elder man, who, in reply to questions, relates the story of Amfortas and his sin.

Klingsor, enraged at being denied admission to the Order of the Grail after his mad act of self-mutilation, raised by his infernal arts a magic castle and gardens not far from Montsalvat.

This he filled with lovely girls, who tempted the Knights of the Round Table. Amfortas resolved to destroy this Castle of Perdition. Armed with the sacred lance which pierced the Saviour's side he laid siege to Klingsor's abode. Unluckily for him a supernaturally beautiful woman, Kundry, was sent by Klingsor, — whose heart was black with envy, — and waylaid by her Amfortas succumbed to her fascinations. As he was clasped in her embrace the spear dropped and was seized by Klingsor, who gave him a fatal thrust in the side. No alleviation was there for this pain. Even the mystic bread which he occasionally dared to dispense to his knights did not bring ease. Klingsor kept the sacred spear, and by its aid hoped some day to capture Montsalvat itself.

When Gurnemanz finishes this harrowing tale the four squires kneel and sing the above prediction, "Durch Mitleid wissend." Cries are suddenly heard, and knights rush in to inform their horrified hearers that a blasphemer has dared to enter the sacred park and shoot one of the swans. The culprit is dragged in. It is Parsifal, with his bow and arrow. The swan lies in death throes before him. While vainly endeavoring to discover his name, his identity, Gurnemanz reproaches him for having shed innocent blood, and points out to him the heinousness of his offence. Parsifal is overcome with shame — and pity. Here is first indicated

the cardinal trait of his character. He relates to Gurnemanz the little he knows of his early life — with which the reader is already acquainted — and tells of his mother Herzeleide. Kundry sneeringly interrupts. His mother is dead from sorrow at her boy's desertion. Parsifal, raging, throws himself upon the woman, but is dragged away. The truth forcing itself upon him, he grows faint and is revived by water from a spring. At this juncture Kundry grows sleepy. Well she knows — though the others do not — that her master is about to summon her. Filled with despair she staggers into the bushes and is seen no more. Gurnemanz, his heart revived by the pure foolishness of the lad, begins to hope anew, and the King's litter returning to the palace, he again questions Parsifal. "What is the Grail?" asks in turn the youth. Then the pair appear to move slowly, and the scene changes, to the accompaniment of the sombre "Verwandlungsmusik," from the forest to rocky galleries, finally to the Byzantine hall of the Holy Grail. All this is accomplished by scenery which moves in grooves. Parsifal questions Gurnemanz as to this phenomenon. "I slowly tread, yet deem myself now far," he says. "Thou seest, my son, to space time changeth here," answers Gurnemanz, which is a choice metaphysical morsel for the admirers of Kant and Schopenhauer.

Now begins the most solemn scene of the music-drama. To the pealing of bells, the in-

toning of trumpets and trombones, the scene of the Holy Grail is inaugurated. Into the vast hall files the cortége of the sick monarch, and the Grail Knights, wearing white coats of arms, a dove embroidered upon a red mantle, advance in double lines and group themselves about the table. They chant, and boys' voices from the middle part of the dome reply, while children's voices in the cupola high above join in a celestial chorus. After a profound silence the voice of Titurel issues from his tomb behind the throne. The dead man is revived by the potency of the Grail. He bids his erring son to perform the sacred office, to uncover the Holy Grail. Then follows a dramatic episode. Conscious of his unworthiness and showing his bleeding side, Amfortas long resists the request of his father. It is a part of his expiation that, sinner as he is, he must officiate at the solemn sacrifice. His protests are not heeded. The children's voices from the cupola recall the prediction, "Durch Mitleid wissend." Exhausted, pale, and suffering untold agonies, Amfortas lifts the crystal vase, the Grail. A ray of piercing pure light falls from above on the chalice — the hall is now dark — which becomes luminous and glows with purple splendor. Amfortas sings, "Take this bread, it is my flesh; take this wine, it is my blood which love has given thee." The singing by the various choirs breaks forth anew, and as daylight returns the holy ceremonies conclude

with the kiss of peace by the brethren. The King is carried away, the knights withdraw as the voices from the cupola sing, "Happy in faith, Happy in love." Parsifal, who has been staring about him all this time, is interrogated by Gurnemanz. The latter has not noticed the convulsive start made by the pure fool when he sees Amfortas fall back upon his couch. Pity has entered his heart, though he is not able to voice this sentiment to Gurnemanz. The latter, angered by such seeming stupidity, thrusts him roughly from the hall, bidding him go seek a goose for his gander. Then, saddened by this fresh disappointment, the old man stands alone in the hall. Like a gleam of hope an alto voice from the mysterious height repeats the prediction, "Durch Mitleid wissend," and is joined by boys' voices. To this music the curtains close.

As in the Rheingold, where Nibelheim follows Walhalla, Wagner gains a violent contrast by placing the action of the second act in Klingsor's dread castle. The scene represents the magician's laboratory — a sort of Faust-like chamber at the top of a tower. The place is in semi-darkness, a well-like abyss to the left evoking a feeling of anticipation. A narrow staircase ascends to an aperture in the wall, an azure slit of the sky being revealed. The floor is strewn with implements of sorcery, and on the steps Klingsor, an Arabian, and fierce looking man with a black beard, is seated gazing into a wiz-

ard's metallic mirror. By its aid he perceives Parsifal approaching the castle, having already forgotten his experiences in Montsalvat and haled by Klingsor's spell. With a cry of satisfaction the magician leaves his vantage post, descends, and approaches the chasm. Throwing incense into it he begins his cabalistic spells; "Up, Kundry, ascend from the gulf! Come to me. Thy master calls thee, thou nameless one, primal fiend, rose of hell! Thou who wert Herodias, and what more! Once Gundryggia, now Kundry; up, up, to thy master; obey him who has sole power over thee!"

A lovely woman appears enveloped in a misty veil. It is Kundry. She screams, a blood-curdling scream which modulates into a feeble, whimpering moan. The dialogue which ensues is not a pleasing one. Klingsor berates the woman for serving the knights like a beast of burden, as reparation for her crime against Amfortas. She sneers at his lost powers, and absolutely refuses to seduce the approaching Parsifal. But in vain she resists her master. A sound of battle is heard. Single-handed, Parsifal, without, routs the feeble, enslaved knights of Klingsor. From his window in the battlements the wizard views the strife with satisfaction. He would be pleased to see his weak servitors killed by this robust, handsome youth. Kundry vanishes to prepare for her fell work of destruction. The tower

sinks to strange, thunderous noises, and we behold Parsifal in a many-colored tropical garden, dense with flowers of an unearthly hue and splendor. Almost immediately he is surrounded by girls, living flowers who coquet, tease, and lure him to ravishing music. The scene is a gay one. Parsifal repulses one group after another, when suddenly a voice sings, "Parsifal, stay." He is deeply moved. "Parsifal? Thus once my mother called me." He remembers his name at last. Thus does Wagner subtly indicate the growing knowledge that passion reveals. A scene of temptation follows that has no parallel in art or literature. Lulling the youth's chaste suspicions by telling him of his mother Herzeleide, she at last wins him to her side and imprints upon his lips his mother's kiss, her own magic kiss. Instead of succumbing Parsifal leaps to his feet and presses his heart. He cries in agony, "Amfortas! the wound — the wound! It burns within me, too." Kundry's kiss shows him what the entire Grail did not know — that she was the cause of the King's downfall. He understands all now, and his one thought is to go to the King and relieve his pain. He is the poor fool who pities. Mad and desperate, Kundry detains him. She believes that he can, if he so wills it, release her from Klingsor's hideous spell. He is to be her saviour; a second one, not the real Jesus at whom she laughed and meeting whose reproach-

ful gaze she forever after wandered. She is the real Woman who laughed. Her laughter shudderingly resounds throughout hell, whenever a sinner yields to her seductions. But Parsifal is different. Perhaps, being a frequenter of the Grail land, and a very Erda for wisdom, Kundry knows of the prediction. She weaves a web of voluptuous beauty; Parsifal escapes its blandishments. Then finding that this fails, she curses him, with furious and hysterical curses. "Renounce desire; to end thy sufferings thou must destroy their source." Thus Parsifal enjoins her. But Kundry will not be convinced. "My kiss it was that made thee clear-sighted. My embrace would make thee divine." He asks for the road to Amfortas. She curses him. "Never, never, shall thou find that road again. The Saviour's curse gives me power. Wander!" She frantically summons Klingsor, who appears upon the terrace with poised spear. The flower girls rush in, and Klingsor hurls the weapon at the audacious intruder. But it whizzes over Parsifal's head, where floating in the air he seizes it and makes the sign of the cross. A cataclysm ensues. The castle and garden sink into the earth, accompanied by volcanic explosions, the flower girls become withered hags, and all the enchanting vista of flowers is transformed into an arid waste. Kundry falls to the ground prostrated. Parsifal, surveying this desolate ruin from the shattered

ramparts, utters to Kundry these prophetic words, "Thou knowest where to find me." Immediately the curtains veil this effective scene.

Act III brings us back to the Grail confines, where a tender, idyllic landscape on the edge of a forest discloses a hermit's hut, with a spring hard by. It is a spring morning. Gurnemanz, now a white-haired, sorrowful old man, has relinquished all hope of a saviour for the King. He feels that unless death intervenes, Klingsor will become master of the Grail, for he knows nothing of the stirring events in the preceding act. A low cry in the bushes apprises him of Kundry's presence. She is half dead, but is revived by the old hermit. She feebly moans, "Service, service," and then rises and goes to the hut, where she gets a pitcher. This she carries to the spring, and fills. Gurnemanz marvels at her altered and penitential appearance. But she makes signs. One is approaching. A stranger knight in coal black armor, with visor down and spear in hand, is seen. He gravely advances. Gurnemanz asks his name. The stranger shakes his head. Adjured to remove his armor, as it is Good Friday, and no Christian knight must bear arms on that holy day, the stranger obeys. He plants his spear in the ground, removes his shield and sword, unfastens his armor, takes off his helmet, and kneels in fervent prayer before

the lance. At once he is recognized by Gurnemanz as the youth who killed the swan, and the lance is also remarked with keen emotion. "Oh, blessed day," cries the old man, who knows that his King's saviour is now at hand. Now follows a series of pictures. They move before the eyes like some strange dream in a land where life has resolved itself into processional attitudes. One dissolves into another. The kneeling knight recalls an Albrecht Dürer, and his blessing by Gurnemanz, his baptism of the repentant Kundry, — who utters but two words during the act, — and the washing of his feet Magdalen-like, are all accompanied by music that is almost gesture, and with gestures that are almost musical. Gurnemanz informs Parsifal that Amfortas is in sad extremities, his father, Titurel, no longer strengthened by the Grail, is really dead, and the King refuses to perform the sacred office. It is this great hour of need in which Parsifal appears. Parsifal tells Gurnemanz of his weary wanderings over the earth in search of Montsalvat. Sorely beset by foes, yet he dare not use the sacred spear. It has been kept intact from worldly stain or strife. Then follows the soothing Good Friday magic music episode, when all nature puts on its sweetest attire to give thanks to the Saviour who suffered. Bells are heard. It is noon. As in the first act, but by a different route and accompanied by other music, the

scene slowly changes to the domed Temple of the Holy Grail. The funeral services of Titurel are being held. The hall is full of mourning knights. Amfortas, his agony at its apex, refuses to unveil the Grail, and begs his companions to slay him, for he can no longer endure his pain and shame. Parsifal enters, accompanied by Gurnemanz. He witnesses the King's paroxysm, and then advances to him. With the point of the lance he heals the wound. Kundry dies on the altar steps, and Parsifal, now King of Montsalvat, mounts the step and lifts on high in silent invocation the crystal vase. Mystic voices in the cupola sing "Wondrous work of mercy. Salvation to the Saviour." Thus the mystic melodrama ends.

In the first draft of his poem Wagner ended the play with these words: —

> Great is the charm of desire,
> Greater is the power of renunciation.

In all the complicated web of this drama Pity and Renunciation are the two principal motives. Wagner drew his themes from all sources, — sagas, legends, poems, and histories. He incorporated episodes from the Saviour's life, and boldly utilized the theme of the Last Supper. The blood of Christ which Joseph of Arimathea is said to have received in a chalice becomes the comforting and eucharistic Grail. Then side by side with all these conflicting stories he places the

semi-Saracenic Klingsor, the very embodiment of a magician of the Dark Ages, and Kundry, the type of the woman of all times, the wandering Jewess, the Magdalen. Parsifal is a mediæval Jesus; the knights of the Holy Grail, Apostles transposed to a later epoch. As it suited him Wagner violently tossed about and made sport of the poetic ideas of Chrétien de Troies and Wolfram von Eschenbach. He Wagnerized everything he touched. The result is Parsifal.

If the poem is charged to the full with Semitic, Buddhistic, Patristic, Christian, and Schopenhauerian philosophies, the play affords the great master fresco painter superb opportunities for scenic display. The son of Geyer, himself a scene painter, dramatist, poet, and composer, did not fail to take advantage of the chance to indulge his taste for luxuriant, glowing colors, for sensational contrasts, lofty spaces, and all the moving magnificence of panoramic display. There are many tableaux in this drama, genuinely a static drama. In Act I we see Gurnemanz surrounded by the tender squires, while Kundry cowers in the foreground. "Doch Vater sag, und lehr' uns fein; du kanntest Klingsor, wie mag das sein?" The tableau of the killed swan, with Parsifal admonished by Gurnemanz, is another noteworthy grouping. Nothing is so impressive, however, as the spectacle of the sick King being raised, as he elevates the Grail,

Klingsor's tower is as sinister as an etching by Salvator Rosa. The flower garden, first with the damsels and then desolate, gives two striking pictures. Parsifal stands spear in hand. "Du weisst: wo einzig du mich wiedersiehst!" The praying knight in Act III; Parsifal in white baptismal robe, recalling Ary Scheffer's portrait of Christ, and last of all the noble harmonies of the last scene, the descending dove and the mystic chant: —

Höchsten Heiles Wunder,
Erlösung dem Erlöser.

### TO A KINGLY FRIEND

O König! holder Schirmherr meines Lebens!
Du höchster güte wonnereichster Hort!

* * * * * *

Was du mir bist, Kann staunend ich nur fassen,
Wenn mir sich zeigt, was ohne dich ich war.

* * * * * *

Du bist der holde Lenz, der neu mich schmückte,
Der mir verjüngt der Zweig und Aeste Saft:

— RICHARD WAGNER.

## II

### THE MUSIC

One is filled with admiration at Wagner's deft use of thematic material in the score of Parsifal. Despite the exegetical enthusiasm of von Wolzo-

gen, Heintz, and Kufferath, a very few motives suffice the master for his polyphonic skill in development. And they are principally in the prelude — now unhappily a familiar concert room number. I say unhappily because no composer's music is less adapted to concert than Wagner's. Divorced from the context of gesture, speech, scenic display, his music becomes all profile. One misses the full, rich, significant glance of the eye. Wagner is a weaver, not a form-maker. He can follow a dramatic situation, or burrow deeply into the core of morbid psychology; but let him attempt to stand alone, to write music without programme or the fever of the footlights — then he is the inferior of several men, the inferior of Liszt, Tschaïkowsky, and Richard Strauss; not to mention Beethoven, Schubert, or Chopin. I know that this opinion ill accords with the belief of many, yet I do not think it can be disputed. His preludes and overtures, containing as they do the leading motives of his dramas, are of interest only for that reason. Considered as absolute music they are not noteworthy, notwithstanding their coloring and grandiose themes. So is it with Parsifal — even more so. The work preëminently smells of the lamp. It lacks spontaneity. Its subject is extremely undramatic. Nothing happens for several hours, — nothing but discourses, philosophical and retrospective. Never has Wagner so laboriously

built a book. It is a farrago of odds and ends, the very dust-bin of his philosophies, beliefs, vegetarian, anti-vivisection, and other fads. You see unfold before you a nightmare of characters and events. Without simplicity, without lucidity, without naturalness — Wagner is the great anti-naturalist among composers — this book, through which has been sieved Judaism, Buddhism, Christianity, Schopenhauerism, astounds one by its puerility, its vapidity. Yet because of his musical genius, Wagner is able to float this inorganic medley, and at times makes it almost credible. It is an astounding feat of the old hypnotist — for hypnotist he is in Parsifal as in no other composition. By sheer force of his musical will, this Klingsor of Bayreuth hypnotizes his hearers with two or three themes not of themselves remarkable, as Charcot controls his patients with a shining mirror.

Wagner always selected librettos that threw up a lot of dust for the erudite. His Tristan demands much delving, and with the Ring and its complementary literature we shall never finish. The plain fact in the case is this: Parsifal, despite all its wealth of legend, its misty, poetic allusiveness, its manufactured mysticism, is simple old-fashioned opera. And its verse *quâ* verse is very bad. The Wagnerites reject this statement as does the devil holy water. Supposing you enter the Wagner theatre, your brain cells unencumbered with the memories of Perceval, Par-

zival, Parsifal, Fal-Parsi, and the rest of the philological mystification, what do you see? — and remember that the ideal drama should set forth without previous knowledge or explanation its dramatic content.

You see an old-fashioned and very tedious opera — setting aside some of the music; and there is throughout an abuse of the *tremolo* that sounds suspiciously Italian. You see a lot of women-hating men, deceiving themselves with spears, drugs, old goblets, all manners of juggling formulas, and yet being waited upon by a woman — a poor, miserable witch. You see a silly youth treated as if he had murdered a human being because he shot a swan. You see this same dead bird borne away on a litter of twigs, to noble, impressive music like a feathered Siegfried. Surely Wagner was without a sense of the humorous; or was he parodying his own Death of Siegfried, as Ibsen parodied Ibsen in A Wild Duck? You see a theatrically imposing temple, modelled after the Duomo of Siena, wherein a maniacal King raves over an impossible wound, and performs ceremonies recalling the Roman Catholic communion service. In Act II you are transported to the familiar land of Christmas pantomime. There a bad magician seeks to destroy the castle of the noble knights, and evokes a beautiful phantom to serve his purpose. There are spells, incantations, blue lights, screaming that makes the blood run cold, and the

whole bagful of tricks that Weber, Marschner, and even Mozart delighted in. Follows fast the magic garden, and the sirens with rose petals on head. The foolish boy still eludes temptation. Even the beautiful witch cannot lure him. All is fairy play, pantomimic transformations, castles that crumble, thunder-riven gardens, and the whizzing of a malignant lance. Even that old Gounod ruse, the sign of the cross, is employed, and with overpowering effect. Now what possesses a generation which knows Darwin, has read Herbert Spencer, and can follow with delight the unerring logic of events that unroll themselves in the Ibsen plays — what possesses this generation of ours to sit enthralled before all this nebulosity?

The third act is but a faint *replica* of the first — without its vigor or novelty. Here the librettist is in sore straits. So he drags in Magdalen washing the feet of Parsifal which is offensively puerile. We again see the scenery acting, pantomimic scenery, and once more we are transported to the Hall of the Holy Grail, where the music of Allegri, Palestrina, and Vittoria is marvellously mimicked. Wagner, not being a strikingly original theme-maker, always borrowed, — borrowed even from Berlioz, — and the results of his borrowings are often greater than the originals. In a beatific blaze of glory — after Parsifal has healed the King — this sacred melodrama ends, and the spectator, drugged by

the music, confused by the bells chanting the tortuous story, and his eyes intoxicated by feasts of color, staggers away believing that he has witnessed a great work of art. So he has, — the art of debauch in color, tone, and gesture. "The highest perfection of an art," says Ehlert, "is not always and necessarily the greatest massing together of forces. It depends upon entirely different conditions. The flower of an art arises only when a positively artistic individuality creates that particular work for which it possesses the most marked and exclusive vocation." Now Wagner heaps up one art, one idea, upon another. He little cared for the dramatic proprieties or the feelings of his audience when he composed Kundry, a ridiculous hag, an Astarte, a Herodias, a Meg Merrilies, and a Mary Magdalen in one. She is Azucena when she reveals to Parsifal his parentage — perhaps Wagner had heard of Il Trovatore! — and she plays Potiphar's wife to this effeminate lad. She is of the opera operatic. And Klingsor — is he a creation, this hater of men and women? — why, he is nothing else but any giant or any enchanter in any fairy tale. Parsifal, when he is not a simulacrum of Christ in white baptismal robes, is a peculiarly foolish bore. Without Siegfried's buoyancy, Wagner tried hard to dower him with Siegfried's youth. But he is only an emasculate Siegfried. The corpse of Titurel is a horrible idea — yet it fits in this bogie-man's play.

Wagner, after all, was the creature of his century, an incurable Romantic, with all the love of the Romantics for knights, mediæval mysteries, maidens in distress,— in this case a callow boy, — magicians, and dead men who tell tales. The scenery, too, never comes up to one's realization, and as usual Wagner oversteps the mark by surrounding his hero with too many women. The duo with Kundry is much more effective. The eye and the ear can grasp the situation — a stirringly dramatic one, despite the morbid imagination of the poet who could in his search for voluptuous depravity mingle a mother's with a courtesan's kiss. Here Paris itself is surpassed in the piquant and decadent. Wagner's admiration for Baudelaire's poetry shows itself in this incident. By the magic of his mother's name, Kundry evokes a maudlin filial passion, and with his mother's name on her lips she kisses the youth into the first consciousness of his virility — or a semblance of it, for at no time is Parsifal a normal young man. His act of renunciation, in his particular case, denies life.

Again I ask, What is the lure that gathers multitudes to witness this most nonsensical, immoral of operas? The answer is, The Music, always The Music. Not Wagner at the flood-tide of his musical passion, nor the composer of Tristan and Isolde, or the Ring or Die Meistersinger; yet an aged wizard who had retained his old arts of enchantment, and so great are they

that at times he not only makes one forget his book, but even the poverty of his themes — Parsifal is not musically original; rather it is an extraordinary synthesis of styles, an unique specimen of the arts of combination, adaptation, and lofty architectonics. Let us glance at the score.

Never has Wagner been so bald in his exposition as in the prelude. But its simplicity is deceptive. The Love theme, — in A flat, by von Wolzogen named the Love Feast motive, — the Grail Hope theme, the Dresden Amen, and the Faith theme, — these and a subsidiary theme, the Saviour's Lament, about comprise this overture. And the figure of the Saviour's agony contains a few of the most poignant bars Wagner ever penned. This short episode is infinitely more sincere than the Faith motive — "What expression would a man like Wagner find for such an experience?" asks Ehlert. The Speech of Promise, *i.e.* the prediction "Durch Mitleid wissend," is charmingly prophetic, but the first section of Act I drags both dramatically and musically. I am never disappointed in the Kundry music, for I have long known it in Liszt's B minor sonata, and before Liszt it may be found in the opening bars of Chopin's B minor sonata. There is much Liszt in this score. The trick of the twice repeated modulation into the upper diminished third, as in the case of the Faith theme, is an old Lisztian device. Kun-

dry's chief motive is to be found in the B minor sonata. It is not very characteristic, nor is the evocation of Arabia. Kundry enters on Valkyrie pinions, and the best thing she does is her shuddering screech — that same cry of distress so cleverly utilized by Massenet in Le Cid. Wagner draws heavily upon the second act of Die Walküre. Indeed Parsifal is full of Wagner quotations: Lohengrin, Tristan and Isolde, Die Meistersinger — there is much in Gurnemanz's bars — and even Götterdämmerung — the Rhine daughters' music is heard in the garden scene. Amfortas's suffering motive is not very convincing, nor are we impressed by the Forest Murmur with its canonic *appoggiaturas*. Ever this essential turn! As in the Good Friday magic spell — written years before the opera — the composer echoes Siegfried and Die Meistersinger, — the first fine, careless rapture of his wood-music he never recaptured. And this is quite natural. An old man, Wagner had reached the end of his ammunition. Many blank cartridges are fired in Parsifal. The Sorcery motive with its Chopin-like chromaticism has meaning; but I confess I do not care for Parsifal's motive, beautifully as it is developed. It lacks the bold, lusty, clean-cut vigor of his young Siegfried's horn call. Wagner musically was always true to himself. He unconsciously divined the effeminacy of Parsifal's nature, and his music is a truer psychological barometer than all the

learned pundits who write reams about the purity of Parsifal. Kundry's Service theme — in "helpful" thirds — is by no means so exquisitely musical as the Mitleid motive in Die Walküre. And what could be more absurd than the use of the Saviour's Lament motive as the dead swan is reverently carried away. The Herzeleide motive is lovely music, especially when it is thrown into high relief during the next act by Kundry's blandishments. The fleeting appearance of the Lohengrin Swan motive is a very happy idea.

We have now reached the last part of the first act with its *Glockenthema*, its laments of Amfortas, — the accents of woe are genuine, — and the magnificent tonal panorama of boys' voices, bells, choral music. Here, not without reverence, the composer has successfully emulated the service of Rome. The tripartite choral divisions recall both Goethe's Faust and the spherical order of voices, and the antiphonal choirs of mediæval cathedrals. The effect is indescribable, especially when the pure, sexless boys' voices are heard *a capella*. The consummation of this mystical ecstasy is reached when the Grail vase is slowly waved aloft. One realizes that Wagner's genius, which so often gravitates pedulum-wise between the sublime and the ridiculous, here approaches the former.

Act II, in which the ruling key seems to be B minor, — as A flat predominates the preceding

act, — naturally introduces fewer new motives. The Klingsor theme, first heard in Gurnemanz's slightly tedious recital, and the Kundry theme are most in evidence in the stormy prelude. To be quite frank I always find the Flower Girls' music a disappointment. The Caress valse theme is a trifle commonplace, and only Wagner's polyphonic skill lends the music some dignity. The evocation of Kundry by Klingsor in the opening scene is full of demoniacal grandeur. Wagner is nothing if not operatic, and here he shows that his old Weber skin has not been completely shed. Kundry's galloping motive, also employed for Parsifal, is the familiar Valkyrie figure modified. I heard the Erl-King storm through several bars, and the triplet figuration of the Flower Girls is from a trio in one of Schumann's symphonies — the B flat, if I remember aright.

The crowning scene of this act — one is tempted to say of the entire work, for Wagner spreads his music thin over a wide surface — is the duo of Parsifal and Kundry. Herein the entire gamut of passion, maternal, exquisite, voluptuous, is traversed by a master hand. And never has Wagner's touch been so sure. Intellectually nothing could be more complete than this delineation, morbid and morose as it occasionally is. In a dramatic sense it saves the opera. We hear the Parsifal, the Herzeleide motives — and a supplementary Herzeleide theme. The outburst of Parsifal after the kiss with its memo-

ries of Amfortas's suffering is wonderful. The Saviour's theme, Kundry's Yearning theme and Self-Abandonment motive, are all made up of familiar material. Here the spinning of the web into something strange and touching is the principal virtue, not the themes themselves. Klingsor's sudden appearance and the hurled lance which is carried out in the score by harps *glissando* through two octaves, the mourning cries of the pretty girls, and Parsifal's final words — all these kaleidoscopic effects impress one considerably; action is paramount. Parsifal's music in Es startt der Blick dumpff auf das Heil'sgefäss may arouse the indignation of the purist with its direct succession of the G flat major and D minor triads (page 187 of the vocal score); but to modern ears his scheme of harmonization is as normal as the book is abnormal. In a Wagner opera, or, if you will, a music-drama, everything must be accepted, dissonantal harmonies as well. This composer follows every curve of his poem, and when a situation demands jarring ugliness, he freely offers it. Who to-day shall say what is or what is not ugly music?

The music of the last act presents little novel thematic material. In the gloomy prelude we find epitomized the wandering of Parsifal in search of the Grail domain, in conjunction with the funeral music of Titurel. Again the static and contemplative forms a contrast to the rapid

action of the preceding scene. The very pauses seem pregnant with music. And I must halt here a moment to lay my tribute of admiration at the feet of Milka Ternina, whose Kundry is a dramatic and musical creation of rare imagination and technical skill. She presents three different women — we are perplexed to say whether Kundry defiant, or Kundry seductive, or Kundry repentant is the most wonderful. But Ternina is always wonderful! It is in this scene, with its sun-smitten meadows, its worshipping knight and mournful penitent, that I agree with those commentators who perceive the profound influence exerted upon Wagner by early German and Flemish religious pictorial art. Parsifal's attitudes here would suit a Gothic triptych — as M. Charles Tardieu so happily expresses it. There is little movement, all gesture has been transferred to the orchestra, and the spectator seems to be participating in one of those miracle plays or viewing the stiff pictures of a Cimabue or a woodcut after Dürer. The moving forest and the final scene lose because of repetition. But what was the poet to do? Only in Act II does he escape the lack of variety. For instance, in Act I Parsifal stands for a long time immobile, with his back to the audience, while Kundry, in the last act, utters but two words. She is a pantomimic lay figure kept on the stage to emphasize the resemblance between Jesus and Parsifal. And the feet washing epi-

sode is absolutely unnecessary. It does not help the story. Nowhere but in Wagner would all this mish-mash of gospel narrative, mediæval romance, and Teutonic philosophy be tolerated. Yet the Wagnerites sit through it all as if listening to a new evangel of art, philosophy, and religion. Perhaps they are. In America, where new religions sprout daily as do potatoes in a dark cellar, slighter causes have led to the foundation of a religion — witness the rise and growth of Mormonism. If religion could ever become moribund, perhaps in Wagner's Parsifal would be found the crystallization of many old faiths, presented in a concrete, though Wagnerized, form. "I know of but one thing more beautiful than Parsifal," wrote Alfred Ernest, and approvingly quoted by M. Kufferath, "and that is any low mass in any church." And in this sentence the French author puts his finger on the weak spot of Parsifal — its lack of absolute sincerity. No matter how great an art work it may be, it yet lacks the truthful note that is to be found at any low mass in a Roman Catholic church — about the most unadorned service I can remember. With all its grandeur, its pathos, its conjuring of churchly and philosophical motives, its ravishing pictures and marmoreal attitudes, Parsifal falls short of the one thing — faith, a faith you may find in any roadside Bavarian cabin. We have seen that it is weakest musically in the Faith motive of the

prelude, and ethically it suffers from the same sterility. All the scholarly efforts to make the work an ethical, philosophical, and an artistic message are futile. Parsifal, even if it will "enjoy a small immortality," must remain an opera, a cunning spectacle devised by a man of genius in the twilight of his powers. It is Wagner's own Götterdämmerung, the sunset music of his singular career.

But if this Parsifal music lacks the virile glow and imaginative power of his earlier music, it is none the less fascinating. Over all hovers, like the dove in the temple, a rich mellowness, a soothing quality that is the reverse of his stormy, disquieting, youthful art. It really seems as if Pity, pity for the tragedy of existence, for the misery of all animated beings, had filled parts of the score with a soothing balm. The muted pauses, the golden stream of tone, and the almost miraculous musicianship fill the listener with awe. Never before has Wagner's technical mastery come to such a triumphant blossoming. And the partition is covered with miniatures that excite admiration both for their workmanship and their musical meanings. It was Nietzsche who first called critical attention to the Lilliputian delicacy of Wagner's music. A fresco painter, he yet finds time to execute the most minute and tender jewel-like bits, that are lost sight and sound of at the first hearing. Never has Wagner's instrumentation

been so smoothly sonorous, so well mixed, so synthetic. It recalls richly embroidered altar cloths or Gobelin tapestry. Weaving similes force themselves upon the hearer when describing this marvellous and modern polyphonic art. But how tell of the surge and undertow of his melting, symphonious narrative! It flashes with all the tints of a Veronese, of a Makart, and then appear in processional solemnity the great flat spaces and still figures of some mediæval, low-toned, distemper painter. Painting and weaving — always these two arts! But there is not the same passionate excess in decoration, the same tropical splendor, that we find in the earlier Wagner. Venus wooes Tannhäuser in more heated accents than does Kundry Parsifal. And Kundry is *the* depraved woman of all art, for Kundry's quiver of temptations is more subtle, more decadent.

The correspondence of King Ludwig and Wagner, of Ludwig and Josef Kainz, the actor, throws much light on the enigmatic character of Parsifal. Wagner needed money and encouragement, badly. So it is not difficult to conceive of him playing up to every romantic extravagance of the young king — "le seul vrai roi de ce siècle," as Paul Verlaine poetically called the monarch, whose madness admirably matched his own. Read in this sense, the psychology of Kundry's kiss and its repelling effect and its arousing of pity for Amfortas in Par-

sifal is no longer a mystery. Wagner never erred in his morbid musical psychology, and he thus symbolized Amfortas — Wagner — as being rescued from suffering by Parsifal — Ludwig. Wagner had been ever an ungrateful man, but for the King he entertained the most exalted sentiment of gratitude. There is a psychiatric literature on this esoteric subject in German and French beginning with Oskar Panizza, ending with the remarkable study of Hanns Fuchs, entitled Richard Wagner.

Parsifal will long remain a rare and stimulating spectacle to those for whom religious feeling must be dramatized to be endurable. The stern simplicities of doctrinal truths have no attraction for such. Wagner, luxuriously Byzantine in his faiths, erected a lordly pleasure drama in which the mystically inclined, the admirer of theatrical pomps, and the esoteric worshipper could all find solace, amusement, and consolation. Yet Parsifal's pale virtue can never stir us to higher issues, as do the heroic sacrifices of Tannhäuser or Senta. Parsifal is the predestinated one, predestined to save the life of the King. Lacking freedom of will, he is not a human being that provokes our sympathy — but why demand logic, even dramatic logic, of Wagner? He was first a musician, then a poet and a philosopher; and in the last of these three was least. Parsifal is his final offering to the world. It is the work of a man who had outlived his genius.

Nietzsche quotes with approval the exclamation of a musician: "I hate Wagner, but I no longer stand any other music." We are all Wagnerians whether we rebel at Parsifal or not.

# III

## NIETZSCHE THE RHAPSODIST

Tell me, where is justice to be found which is love with seeing eyes? — *Also sprach Zarathustra.*

### I

A SANE and complete estimate of the life and philosophical writings of Friedrich Nietzsche has yet to be made in English. Mentally dead since 1889, his death, in a private retreat at Weimar in 1900, created little stir; yet we predict that this great, if rhapsodical thinker, will occupy a place in the pantheon of philosophers. Like Emerson, he formulated no system; he is a stimulus to thought, an antiseptic critic of all philosophies, religions, theologies, and moral systems, an intellectual rebel, a very Lucifer among ancient and modern thinkers.

His life, barring his friendship with Wagner, and its sad conclusion, is rather barren of interest or incident. It was a fiery soul tragedy; outwardly the world saw a quiet, very reserved, almost timid man of cultivated bearing and disinclined to the pursuits of the ambitious. He was born at Röcken, near Lützen, Octo-

ber 15, 1844. His father was a clergyman; indeed he descended from a long line of clerical ancestors, which possibly accounts for the austere strain in the man. This philosopher with a hammer, this demolisher of Antichrist, this writer who outraged all religious Europe, was a man of pure, upright life, a scholar, a gentleman, a poet. Taking up philology mainly as a makeshift, he occupied the chair of classical philology at the University of Basle. His weak eyesight — his life long he was a sufferer from headaches, a weak stomach, and crabbed nerves — drove him to a retirement, during which he busied himself with art and philosophy. The Birth of Tragedy in 1872 attracted Richard Wagner's attention, for here was a partisan not to be despised. In 1876 Nietzsche published Richard Wagner in Bayreuth, and Wagnerism had found its philosophical exponent. A friendship, ideal in its quality, grew up between composer and thinker. But the sensitive nature of Nietzsche could brook no rivals, and he soon fell away from Wagner and Bayreuth. Many have sought to explain this defection. Nietzsche's devoted sister, Elizabeth Förster-Nietzsche, accused Richard and Cosima Wagner of treachery, while Wagner, on his part, found this intense young disciple a trifle irksome. He could not stir, could not talk sportively — as was his wont — could not make bad puns, could not associate with others without a sorrowful apparition warn-

ing him that he was not true to himself, not true to his higher nature. Wagner, being a natural man, sometimes a coarse and worldly man, resented this spiritual caretaker's solicitude, and so in the rush and excitement of Bayreuth in 1876 he was forced to forget his Nietzsche. Then the usual thing happened: the other one went off in a sulk, and Wagnerism had lost its most fanatical adherent.

The truth in this affair is not difficult to discern. When Wagner was still undiscovered — that is, the latter-day Wagner — Nietzsche sailed his soul abroad for spiritual adventures and found the composer of Tristan and Isolde full of spiritual irony. Exclusive, haughty, jealous — a noble sort of jealousy — he published the good news to the world. Then the mob, *hoi polloi*, began to buy excursion tickets to Bayreuth, and Nietzsche shudderingly withdrew. Wagner's music was no longer unique, no longer to be savored by the intellectually aristocratic few. So he sailed his bark for newer, rarer, stranger enterprises and discovered — Nietzsche. After that the madhouse yawned for him, and the world lost a wonderful man, an ecstatic, semi-deranged man, a freethinker who out-topped all freethinkers, one of the greatest individualists since Stirner, and a soul of poetic richness. In 1888 Der Fall Wagner was published and Nietzsche's friends and foes alike noted the decline of a brilliant

intellect. The book is extraordinary. In it are flashes of dazzling fugitive ideation; but it lacks logic, nobility of design; above all, it lacks coherency. Wagner is as bitterly arraigned and attacked as the apostle of degeneration, as before he was hailed as the Dispenser of the New Evangel of music, poetry, and philosophy. It is a pity that this violent work should have introduced Nietzsche to the English-speaking world. It is too fantastic, too ill-balanced, to serve as a dignified polemic, or yet as a corrective. In Germany it but strengthened Wagner's cause. Yet its occasional meteoric lucidity, its wit, its blows with a hammer, are at times extremely diverting. The last of his writings, it should be read the last. We say the last, for his Transvaluation of All Values — the first part of which is Antichrist, need not concern us here — was begun when the author was struck down. After Wagner, Bizet; after Parsifal, Carmen; for he swore that Bizet was the greater, Bizet the creator of La Gaya Scienza. Nietzsche had to swing to the other extreme musically after his secession from Wagnerism. But Bizet ——!

The Nietzsche philosophical pedigree is not difficult to trace. He comes intellectually from Max Stirner — especially Stirner — Bakounine, the anarchist, and Karl Gutzkow. As mad a Schopenhauerian as Richard Wagner, he threw over his allegiance to the Master Pessimist when he discovered that there can be no will to live

without previous existence, and existence presupposes will. It is the *Will to Power* that is Nietzsche's cardinal doctrine, and this will to power is neither evil nor good, for our Siegfried among philosophers would transvalue all moral values. In his divagations with a hammer — he called himself the Philosopher with a Hammer — Nietzsche smashed all idols, old, new, and to come. He likewise, in his intellectual fury and craving after universal knowledge, smashed the exceeding delicate mechanism of his own brain. Boasting of Polish blood, he, like Poland, represented a disintegrated individualism. Nietzsky was said to be the ancestral name, and with it was inherited all the pride of his nationality. He loathed the common herd more than Horace, more than Flaubert — to whom life was but a bad smell. Herbert Spencer's philosophical moderation, the tepid piety of the middle classes, he equally scorned. He would have us all aristocrats in mind and body, and Wagner's snobbery — so necessary to his worldly advancement — filled Nietzsche with disgust. No king, no pope, no democracy, could bind his rebellious intellect. Like Ibsen's Brand he sought ever the steepest heights. A lonely soul is Zarathustra — Nietzsche, and one of the most saddening scenes in Also sprach Zarathustra (begun in 1883, finished in 1885, but not published until 1892) is his finding of the animals, the pope and Wagner worshipping the Jackass

according to the ritual of the Roman Catholic church. It was Wagner's Parsifal that stung him to madness. The anti-naturalism, the mysticism, the attempted revival in theatric form of — to him — hierarchical superstitions and various abnormalities, shocked the soul of Nietzsche. In his wonderful prose epic, Wagner appears masked as the Wizard, the prophet of pity, of redemption of all the formulas hated by this extraordinary thinker.

It is mere childishness, or else bigotry, to point at Nietzsche's end as the moral tag of his life. If he had lived during the Middle Ages, either he would have been burnt alive or else have proved a formidable rival to some angelic doctor. But living in the nineteenth century, a century of indifference to men of his ardent temperament, he erected his own stake and fagots and the mad genius within him burnt up his mind. While he would not have so astonished the world if born to work in the dogmatic harness of the Roman Catholic church, yet its discipline might have quieted his throbbing nerves, and perhaps given the faith a second Rosmini.

A magnificent dialectician, Nietzsche threw overboard all metaphysical baggage. He despised the jargon of Schoolman and modern philosophers. For him Hegel was a verbalistic bat, blind to the realities of life; and it is just at this point that the influence of the insurgent

has been so provocative of good. He has overturned the barriers of a repulsive metaphysical terminology and dared to be naked and natural, though a philosopher. He erected no system, no vast, polyphonic edifice with winding staircase and darkened chambers. Nietzsche made no philosophical formula; rather, his formula is an image, the image of a lithe dancer. The writer of this résumé pretends to see the beginnings of Nietzsche's philosophy, or poetry, in the second part of Faust. When Euphorion, that child of Helena and Faust, of Beauty and Intellect, the merging of the Classical and Romantic, sings:—

> Let me be skipping,
> Let me be leaping,
> To soar and circle
> Through ether sweeping,
> Is now the passion
> That me hath won,

he but set the pace for Nietzsche, the Dancing Philosopher. Dancing blithely over a tight rope stretched between two eternities, the Past and the Future, Man, gay, and unafraid, views the depths of Time and Space. It is "Man who is a rope connecting animal and Beyond Man" (Übermensch). "He is a bridge, not a goal; a transition and a destruction." These seemingly startling statements, which may be found in Thus spake Zarathustra, are, after all, nothing new; Christianity, with its angels and Dar-

winism, with its bold hints at future evolutions and developments, do but say the same things, each in its own way. But Nietzsche, like his beloved Euphorion, must needs graze the rim of the sun in his flight, and Icarus-wise come tumbling to earth — and a Weimar retreat.

The Titanism of Nietzsche, might over right, power over weakness, impels him to hate all weakness, and Christianity, he declares, is a weakness, a degenerate sort of Judaism, complicated with the teachings of Greek mystagogues. He says that the first and only Christian was nailed to the cross, and this should please the heart of Tolstoy. Bolder still is Nietzsche's wish that a Dostoïevsky might have depicted the Christ in all his childlike innocence and Godlike love. Nietzsche worships force and hates slave-morality, *i.e.* all modern religions, in which pity for the weak is basic. To him the symbol of the crucifix is degrading, a symbol of degenerating races. A very Spartan, he would have the great blond barbarian once more trample, Attila-like, the blood-stained soil of Europe and Asia, sparing none. *Væ Victis!* "What is best belongeth to my folk and myself. And if it is not given to us, we take it, the best food, the purest sky, the strongest thoughts, the most beautiful women." Thus spake Zarathustra, and the voice is Nietzsche's, but the hands are the hands of Esau — Bismarck: Blood and Iron!

It is in Also sprach Zarathustra that the

genius of Nietzsche is best studied. Like the Buddhistic Tripatka, it is a book of highly colored Oriental aphorisms, interrupted by lofty lyric outbursts. It is an ironic, enigmatic rhetorical rhapsody, the Third Part of a half-mad Faust. In it may be seen flowing all the currents of modern cultures and philosophies, and if it teaches anything at all, it teaches the wisdom and beauty of air, sky, waters, and earth, and of laughter, not Pantagruelian, but "holy laughter." The love of earth is preached in rapturous accents. A Dionysian ecstasy anoints the lips of this latter-day Sibyl on his tripod, when he speaks of earth. He is intoxicated with the fulness of its joys. No gloomy monasticism, no denial of the will to live, no futile thinking about thinking, — so despised by Goethe, — no denial of grand realities, may be found in the curriculum of this Bacchantic philosopher. A Pantheist, he is also a poet and seer like William Blake, and marvels at the symbol of nature, "the living garment of the Deity" — Nietzsche's deity, of course. It is this realistic, working philosophy — if philosophy it be in the academic sense — that has endeared Nietzsche to the newer generation, that has set his triumphant standard on the very threshold of the new century. After the metaphysical cobweb spinners, the Hegels, Fichtes, Schellings, after the dreary pessimism of the soured Schopenhauer, — whose pessimism was temperamental, as is all pessi-

mism, so James Sully has pointed out, — after many negations and stumblings, the vigorous affirmations of this Nihilist are stimulating, suggestive, refreshing, especially in Germany, the stronghold of philosophical and sentimental Philistinism. Not reward, but the sheer delight of living, of conquering self, of winning victories in the teeth of defeat, — thus spake the wisdom of Nietzsche.

For English-speaking readers the many attacks on Nietzsche have placed the philosopher under the cloud of a peculiar misconception. Viciously arguing that a man in a madhouse could only produce a mad philosophy, his assailants forgot that it was Nietzsche's very intensity of mental vision, his phenomenal faculty of attention, his hopeless attempt to square the circle of things human, that brought about his sad plight. If he had not thought so madly, so strenuously, if he had put to slumber his irritable conscience, his insatiable curiosity, with current anodynes, Nietzsche might have been alive to-day.

In Also sprach Zarathustra he consciously or unconsciously vied with Goethe in Faust; with Wagner's Ring, with Balzac's Comédie Humaine, with Ibsen's Brand, with Tolstoy's War and Peace, with Senancour's Oberman, with Browning's Paracelsus. It is the history of his soul, as Leaves of Grass is Whitman's — there are some curious parallelisms between these

two subjective epics. It is intimate, yet hints at universality; it contains some of Amiel's introspection and some of Baudelaire's morbidity; half mad, yet exhorting, comforting; Hamlet and John Bunyan.

Nietzsche then is a critical mode of viewing the universe, rather than creator of a formal philosophy. He has set his imprint on all European culture, from the dream novels of that Italian of the Renaissance, the new Cellini, Gabriele d'Annunzio, to the Pole Przybyszewski, who has transformed Nietzsche into a very Typhoon of emotion. The musician Heinrich Pudor has imitated the master in his attacks on modern music; while Gerhart Hauptmann, Richard Dehmel — all young Germany, young France, has patterned after the great Immoralist, as he chose to call himself. Among the composers affected by him we find Richard Strauss, not attempting to set the philosophy of Nietzsche to music — as many wrongfully suppose — but arranging, as in a huge phantasmagoria, the emotions excited by the close study of Thus spake Zarathustra. And a many-colored piece of music it is, full of frowning mountains, fragrant meads, and barren, ugly, waste places.

Nietzsche met the fate of all rebels from Lucifer to Byron — neglect and obloquy. With something of Heraclitus, of Democritus, of Bruno Giordano, of Luther in him, there was allied a sensitivity almost Chopin's. The com-

bination is a poor one for practical purposes; so the brain died before the body, — humanity cannot transcend itself. Notwithstanding all his contradictions, limitations, cloudland rhapsodies, aversion from the banal, despite his futile flights into the Inane, his word-weaving, his impossible premisses and mad conclusions, the thunder-march of his ideas, the brilliancy and polish of his style — the greatest German prose since Schopenhauer's — have insured Nietzsche immortality; as immortality goes among world thinkers: fifty years of quotation and then — the biographical dictionaries.

Friedrich Nietzsche is, as Havelock Ellis declares, "a great aboriginal force"; perhaps, with Max Stirner, the greatest in the last half of the nineteenth century. And that same Stirner is the true stock from which Nietzsche sprang — Stirner who dared to say, "*My truth is the truth.*"

Nietzsche died August 28, 1900, literally the *Morgenröthe* of the new century. It was at Weimar, once the home of Goethe and Liszt. Nietzsche was in an insane asylum from 1888. Dr. Hermann Turck asserts that his work was done during a comparatively sane interval between two incarcerations. In 1868 he met Richard Wagner, and under the spell of his synthetic genius he wrote Die Geburt der Tragödie aus dem Geist der Musik, and dedicated it to Wagner, his "sublime forerunner." Every

line of it, he declares in the preface, was "conceived in close communion with Wagner." And let those who know only the later Nietzsche casually read this essay to be convinced of its sanity, its acuity, its penetrating originality. Here we find the enthusiastic, impetuous youth, fresh from his Grecian studies, a valiant champion of Hellenistic culture, an opponent of the orientalization of modern life and thought. Twelve years later he discovered in Parsifal this very despised orientalization, and did not hesitate to say so in The Wagner Case, that fatal illustration of George Moore's pithy axiom: When we change our opinions we change our friends.

The man who marshalled in the most deadly array of attack his arguments against Wagnerism is also the man who wrote the most brilliant book of all on Wagner. Richard Wagner in Bayreuth is a masterpiece of critical rhapsody. The sister who nursed the sick-brained man for twelve years, Frau Friedrich Förster-Nietzsche, tells the story of the dissensions in this friendship, a friendship that could have endured only through a miracle. Both men had "nerves" in a highly irritable condition; and, while Wagner had weathered the storm and had, perforce, developed a stout integument of disdain, Nietzsche had always remained the sensitive, morbid, cloistered student. There is no doubt that Richard Wagner, at the triumphant culmination of his life-work, was an arrogant, exacting, and jealous

being. Wahnfried was, as it now is, a Star Chamber, where the *Vehmgericht* judged swiftly, fiercely. Here is one story told by the sister and quoted by H. E. Krehbiel in his too brief review of the episode: —

My brother and I heard the Triumphlied of Brahms in the Bâle Cathedral. It was a splendid performance and pleased Fritz very much. When he went to Bayreuth in August, he took the pianoforte arrangement with him, apparently in the naïve belief that Wagner would like it. I say "apparently," for upon later reflection it has occurred to me that this red-bound Triumphlied was meant as a sort of goad, and therefore Wagner's prodigious wrath seems to have been not altogether groundless. So I will leave the continuation of the tale to Wagner, who had an exquisite fashion of satirizing himself: —

"Your brother set this red book on the piano; whenever I went into the drawing-room, the red thing stared me in the face; it exasperated me, as a red rag to a bull. Perhaps I guessed that Nietzsche wanted it to say to me, 'See here another man who can turn out something good!' and one evening I broke out with a vengeance."

Wagner had a hearty laugh at the recollection. "What did my brother say?" I asked in alarm. "Nothing at all," answered Wagner. "He simply blushed, and looked at me in astonishment and modest dignity. I would give a hundred thousand marks to have such splendid manners as this Nietzsche, always distinguished, always well bred;

it's an immense advantage in the world." That story of Wagner's came back to my mind at this time (spring of 1875). "Fritz," I said, "why didn't you tell me that tale about Brahms's Triumphlied? Wagner related the whole thing to me himself." Fritz looked straight before him and held his tongue. At last he said, beneath his breath, "Lisbeth, then Wagner was *not* great."

Another time Wagner interfered with a walking tour that Nietzsche had planned to take with the son of Felix Mendelssohn, a professor at Freiburg. The young philosopher winced, but gave in to the elder man's request. His commonplace book reveals his secret irritation. Here is a specimen of his early revolt from the banner of Bayreuth: —

How infinitely purer is the soul of a Bach or a Beethoven in comparison with the soul of a Wagner. In the same sense as Goethe was a painter strayed from his true vocation, and Schiller an orator, Wagner is an actor *manqué*. . . .

Who are the men who swell the ranks of his partisans? Singers who wish to appear more interesting by acting their parts as well as singing them to produce the maximum of effect with a minimum of voice; composers who hoodwink the public by a sort of glamour into a non-critical attitude; audiences who are bored by the old masters and find in Wagner a stimulant for their jaded nerves.

Yet earlier he had written in such an eloquent strain as this: —

Wagner is never more Wagner than when his difficulties increase tenfold, and he triumphs over them with all the legislative zeal of a victorious ruler, subduing rebellious elements, reducing them to simple rhythms, and imprinting the supreme power of his will on a vast multitude of contending emotions. . . . It can be said of him that he has endowed everything in nature with a language. He believed that nothing need be dumb. He cast his plummet into the mystery of sunrise, forest and mountain, mist and night shadows, and learned that all these cherished intense longing for a voice.

Houston Chamberlain believes that when the panegyrics and attacks upon Wagner have been consigned to that eternal limbo, the dust-heap, Nietzsche's Richard Wagner in Bayreuth, will still survive. Perhaps back of the wounded vanity was the usual feeling that in Bayreuth and Wagner his last illusion had vanished; madness was coming on apace. Even his sister admits that he held aloof during the rejoicing and festivities of 1876, and Wagner's *Gemüthlichkeit* expressed in exuberant spirits (probably he stood on his head more than once in those gay times; it was a trick of his, as Praeger relates, — his punning, his advice to his shy, shrinking disciple to get him a wife, useless advice to this ardent upholder of ideal friendship), and all these things told on his nerves. He went away, and later in his Menschliches Allzumenschliches appeared the first faint thread

that, in Der Fall Wagner, had become a scarlet skein of abuse. He depreciated genius as being "a product of atavism, its glory is cheap, its throne quickly reared, and bending the knee to it is a mere habit." Wahnfried, quick to detect heresy, recognized the allusion; and Wagner, deeply pained at the defection of a real friend, forbade his name to be mentioned. And Wagner was, as Nietzsche declared, the *grande passion* of his life.

M. Schuré thus described the personal appearances of Nietzsche: —

> No one who conversed with him could fail to be struck by the powers of his mind, and the singularity of his looks. His closely cropped hair and heavy mustache gave him at first sight the air of a cavalry officer. There was combination of hauteur and timidity in his bearing. His voice, musical and deliberate, betrayed the artistic temperament; his meditative almost hesitating gait, the philosopher. Nothing was more deceptive than the apparent calm of his expression. He had the fixed eye of the thinker, but at the same time it was the eye of the searching and keen observer and the fanatical visionary. This dual character of the eye was almost uncanny, and had a disquieting effect on those who talked with him face to face. His expression in moments of enthusiasm could be one of dreamy sweetness, but almost instantly relapsed again into fierce hostility. . . . There was a distant, isolated atmosphere about the whole Nietzsche personality, a veiled disdain which is often characteristic of the aristocrat of thought.

In a brief tribute to the memory of Friedrich Nietzsche, "So solltet ihr Nietzsche verstehen," in the *Beilage zur Allgemeinen Zeitung*, Frau Professor Wanda Bartels tells of her and her husband's chance acquaintance with the famous thinker during a sojourn in Venice. She dwells upon the contrast of his own modest reserve and unassuming ways with those of the blustering youths who flaunt in public as his followers and believers in his "system"; for he had no system, and "did not write to teach the immature, but to free his own soul." Frau Bartels's protest calls to mind the more weighty and truly enlightening utterances of another personal friend of Nietzsche, Professor Paul Deussen, of Kiel, who, writing in the *Wiener Rundschau* on the Truth about Friedrich Nietzsche, discusses with great clearness the two cardinal points of Nietzsche's doctrine, viz. the Übermensch and the ewige Wiederkehr, or eternal repetition of the world process. The former, Professor Deussen holds, is an ideal of humanity which, in essential points, coincides with the Christ of the church; and when Nietzsche insists that the man within us must be overcome in order that the Übermensch may arise, he preaches what all great moralists and religious teachers have preached. Nietzsche errs in his conception of the nature of the "negation of the will," and in substituting genius for morality (or the intellect for the will) as the means of attaining to an ideal humanity.

After many years of guessing in the dark as to Nietzsche's madness, Dr. George M. Gould points out in a careful and convincing essay that the original trouble began with his eyes, with a faulty diagnosis of his complaint. Dr. Gould writes, after sifting all the evidence of Nietzsche's day-books and his sister's suspicions as to the real cause, in the *Montreal Medical Journal*: —

I have spoken of the physiologic cause of this morbidly feverish intensity of mental activity. It appears to me the inevitable irritation due to severe eye-strain. Nietzsche also thought of suicide. Nietzsche produced within twenty years sixteen volumes, all written by himself in small, clear handwriting, all the result of independent philosophic and original thinking, besides several other volumes of technical philologic studies. He was, moreover, a busy, conscientious teacher and lecturer.

The influence of his disease upon his character and writings is everywhere painfully manifest. Nietzsche was seized with an enthusiasm for Schopenhauer and his works at the age of twenty-one. With greater intensity his devotion to Wagner and his music, I gather, was turned to morbid dislike by the influence of diseased cerebral activity. Deussen, I feel, is in error when he writes that "A deeper cause lay at the root of Nietzsche's resignation of his professorship in 1879 than his 'combined diseases of the nerves of his eyes, brain, and stomach.' The philologic profession of teachers, like a coat, became too small for him, etc. His internal unrest, etc."

But if so, it is an error which only extends the

pathologic to the deeper activities of his mind. How far his cerebral irritation was responsible for his "aristocratic anarchy," his occasional lapses into egoistic disdain, etc., would be impossible to gauge. It surely was not wholly inoperative. Stringency, hardness, radicalism, it certainly helped to produce. Möbius thinks the Zarathustra would not have been written without the morbid cerebral irritation. It appears almost certain that the aphoristic form of much of his later writing is explained as the result of the manner in which he was forced to do his literary work, *i.e.* by thinking and note-making while walking. The serious reflexes to eyes, head, and digestive system, which were induced by writing, compelled him to collate these notes with the least overworking possible. Hence also result the growing contradictions and illogicalities, the discreteness and want of transitional, connecting, and modifying sentences.

In one of the last days of December, 1888, or in the first days of January (dates not definite), Nietzsche fell, near his lodgings in Turin, and could not rise again. A servant found him and led him home with much difficulty. For two days he lay silent and still on his sofa, when abnormal cerebral activity and confusion were evident. He spoke much in monologue, sang and played the piano loud and long, lost the sense of money value, and wrote fantastically to and about his friends, etc. Overbeck hurried to him and brought him to Basle, to the sanatorium of Professor Binswanger, the alienist, where the diagnosis, according to Deussen, of progressive, later corrected to that of atypical, paralysis, was

made. His mother had him brought to Naumburg, cared for him until her death in 1897, after which his sister moved with him to Weimar. He died August 25, 1900.

According to Dr. Reicholdt the immediate cause of his death was pneumonia, with edema of the lungs. There was no autopsy; an examination of the brain would have revealed many secrets.

Is it not an unusual coincidence that Bayreuth, the very hub of Wagner's musical and of Nietzsche's intellectual activities, is also the birthplace of a man who is one of Nietzsche's forerunners, one is tempted to say, his real philosophical progenitor? In the thriving Bavarian village was born, October 25, 1806, Caspar Schmidt, later known to the world as Max Stirner, the author of The Individual and his Property (Der Einzige und sein Eigenthum, Leipsic, 1845), the very gospel of modern philosophical anarchy, and a book which, with Guyau's system of morals, paved the way for Nietzsche. Stirner, poor, unknown, died in Berlin, June 26, 1856. There is a sympathetic study of his life by John Henry Mackay, the German poet with Scotch blood in his veins.

The best single study in the English language on Nietzsche is by Havelock Ellis. This writer hazards the just observation that there was a touch of the "prig" in the philosopher, and that Wagner's free and easy manners often made him wince. "Your brother with his air

of delicate distinction is a most uncomfortable fellow," Wagner said to Frau Förster-Nietzsche, "one can always see what he is thinking; sometimes he is quite embarrassed at my jokes — and then I crack them more madly than ever." And the motley crowd that was attracted to Bayreuth filled the exclusive Nietzsche with horror. An aristocrat, a promulgator of an aristocratic philosophy, writers on social science very properly refuse to class this thinker among the leaders of the anarchistic movement — Nietzsche loathed the promiscuous, the popular, in a word, the mob. Wagner was Teutonic (his friend doubted his Teutonism in a memorable passage); he was no longer Hellenic. And he seemed to be going Romeward. It was all too much for the idealist who broke away from his past; in reality, the attempt was made to break with himself. Impending madness was preceded by distressing melancholia.

He loved Wagner to the last, and previous to the tragic crisis, Lou Salomé says that he went to Lucerne, and in Triebschen sat and wept at his ineluctable fate. He even wrote after The Wagner Case such a sentiment as this: —

"Here, while I am speaking of the recreations of my life, I lack the word to express my gratitude for that which formed my deepest and my heartiest solace. This beyond all doubt was the intimate communion with Richard Wagner. I would give little for the rest of my human rela-

tions; at no price would I cut out of my life the days of Triebschen, days of trust, of cheerfulness, of sublime inspirations, of deep moments. I know not what others have gone through with Wagner; our heaven was never traversed by a cloud."

Was Wagner to blame? Wagner, harassed by a thousand importunings — his gigantic Bayreuth scheme, his money troubles, his uncertain position despite his first big success! Ellis believes, rightly enough, that when Wagner realized Nietzsche was no longer his friend, "he dropped him silently, as a workman drops a useless tool." This seems cruelly selfish; but Wagner had no time for unselfish moods, for fine-spun theories of friendship. He was a realist. Life had made him one; besides, was there not Ludwig of Bavaria to take the place of the once gentle dreamer, now doubter and scorner? And Wagner was old enough to recognize the value of money. No, the great composer is not to be alone censured. Yet must we exclaim, Alas! poor Nietzsche!

## II

What does Nietzsche preach? What is his central doctrine divested of its increments of anti-Semitism, anti-Wagnerism, anti-Christianity, and anti-everything else? Simply, a doctrine as old as the first invertebrate organism which

floated in torrid seas beneath a blazing moon: Egoism, individualism, personal freedom, selfhood. He is the apostle of the *ego*, and he refuses to accept the system spinning of the Teutonic spider philosophers of the day. He is a proclaimer of the rank animalism of man. He believes in the body and not in the soul of theology.

From Heraclitus to Hobbes materialism has flowed, a sturdy current, parallel with hundreds of more spiritual creeds. I say "more spiritual creeds," for the spiritualizing of what was once contemptuously called dead, inorganic matter is being steadily prosecuted by every man of science to-day, whether he be electrician, biologist, or chemist. Nietzsche's voice is raised against the mystagogues, occultists, and reactionaries who, in the name of religion and art, would put science once more under the ban of a century ago. He is the strong pagan man who hates the weak and ailing. He therefore hates the religion of the weak and oppressed. He is an aristocrat in art, believing that there should be an art for artists, and an art — an inferior art — for inferior intelligences. He forgot that there is an art for the artist, — his own particular art, and that into it none but the equally gifted may have an entrance. And he forgot, too, that all great art is rooted in the soil of earth.

Nietzsche hates the music that is beloved of the world. Yet, after the twentieth hearing of

Carmen, he frantically asserts that Bizet is a greater man than Wagner, that he is blither, possesses the divine gayety, sparkle, and indescribable fascination of the Greeks! From his letters we learn that as a joke he put up Bizet as a man of straw to fight the Wagner idol. And a joke it is. But what would he have said to the music of Richard Strauss?

He rejects with contempt pity, — that pity which is akin to love; and therefore he hates Wagner, for in Wagner's music is the note of yearning love and pity sounded by a master hand. To Nietzsche George Eliot's

> Oh may I join the choir invisible
> Of those immortal dead who live again
> In minds made better by their presence: live
> In pulses stirred to generosity,
> . . . in scorn
> For miserable aims that end with self

would have been as silly as was the optimism of Leibnitz to Schopenhauer. This Nietzsche was a terrible fellow, a very Berserker in his mad rage against existing institutions. He used a battering ram of rare dialectic skill, and crash go the religious, social, and artistic fabrics reared ages since! But when the brilliant smoke of his style clears away, we still see standing the same venerable institutions. This tornadic philosopher does damage only to the outlying structures. He lets in light on some dark and dank places. He is a tonic for malaria, musical and

religious; and there is value even in his own fantastic Transvaluation of all Values. I fancy that if Friedrich Nietzsche had been a man of physical resources, he would have been a soldier hero. The late Anton Seidl once told me that he knew the unlucky man when he was a Wagnerian. He was slight of stature, evidently of delicate health, but in his eyes burned the restless fire of genius. If that same energy could have been transmuted into action, he might have been a sane, healthy man to-day. In all this he was not unlike Stendhal, of whom Jules Lemaître wrote: —

"A grand man of action, paralyzed little by little by his incomparable analysis." Nietzsche burned his brain away by a too strenuous analysis of life.

I can recommend to all Wagnerites Nietzsche's Der Fall Wagner. It is bound to take the edge off their uncritical worship. But read it after the first study, Richard Wagner in Bayreuth. It will also demonstrate that Wagner is great, and Wagnerism dangerous. Nietzsche saw with clear eyes the peril that threatens music because of the Wagnerian principles. We must never lose sight of the fact that with Wagner the drama almost always takes precedence. His deviation from his own theory was his artistic salvation. But there lies the danger in him for young composers. He is a man of the theatre. His music, divested of all the metaphysical verbiage heaped upon it by Wagner and Wag-

nerian critics, is music of the footlights. A great formalist he is; but it is Wagner's form, not the form for orchestral writers. It is all well enough to say that the symphony has had its day; but its structure, despite numberless modifications, will survive as long as absolute music itself. And music pure and simple, for itself, undefiled by costumes, scenery, limelights, and vocal virtuosi, is the noblest music of all.

Nietzsche writes of Germany as "being arbitrarily stupefied by itself for nearly a thousand years."

"Nowhere have the two great European narcotics, alcohol and Christianity, been more wickedly misused. Recently a third has been introduced, with which alone every refined and bold activity of intellect can be wiped out — music, our sluggish, ever more sluggish, German music. How much moody heaviness, lameness, humidity, and dressing-gown mood, how much beer is in German intelligence!" You may readily understand that this Nietzsche is a Slav. He is agile of temperament, his mind is a supple one; he loves the keen rapier thrusts, the glancing thrust of the Celt. He hates Germany. Was he a German? He is wholly Slavic at times, and yet what a contradictory man and how naïve his egotism! More feminine altogether than masculine was this febrile, capricious mind, and a hater of the Teuton, a race that is at once both fat and nervous.

Nietzsche is *par excellence* the thinker for the artistic. If Wagner was a painter, or a symphonist *manqué*, then Nietzsche was an artist *manqué*. His prose, swift, weighty, concentrated and brilliant, attracts readers who dislike his doctrines. One must read what he says in his Roving Expeditions of an Inopportune Philosopher.

"Seneca, or the toreador of virtue."

"Rousseau, or return to nature *in impuris naturalibus*."

"Schiller, or the moral Trumpeter of Säckingen."

"Dante, or the hyena poetising in tombs."

"Kant, or *cant*, as an intelligent character."

"Victor Hugo, or Pharos, in a sea of absurdity."

"Michelet, or enthusiasm which strips off the coat."

"Carlyle, or pessimism as an undigested dinner."

"John Stuart Mill, or offensive transparency."

"The Goncourts, or the two Ajaxes struggling with Homer; music by Offenbach."

Nietzsche preached of the beauty and pride of the body. Of pride we cannot have too much. It is the salt of personality. Golden-mouthed Plato, in De Republica, makes outcry against the dullard who thinks shame of his body. The human body is truly a tabernacle,

and woe to him that defileth it, says the wise man.

He once made a proposal to found a monastery for freethinkers. What an abbot he would have been!

Did Nietzsche not declare, in the words of the Apostle Matthew (xvi. 26), slightly altered:—

"For what is a man profited if he shall gain his own soul and lose the whole world?"

Consider his great opponent, Tolstoy, who preaches the doctrine of non-resistance, of altruism, of a depressing socialism which is saturated with the very Orientalism so despised by Nietzsche! But then, Tolstoy does not play fair in the game. He has reached the threescore and ten of Scriptures; he has led, by his own acknowledgment, a life of self-indulgence; he has gambled and drank deeply. His belly was his god. Then he ran the intellectual gamut of dissipation. He worshipped at the shrines of false gods, wrote great, gray, godless novels, won renown, family happiness, riches, love, admiration, applause, and notoriety. So, having lived too happily, he forthwith falls to railing at destiny, like the Englishman Mr. Krehbiel tells us of in his Music and Manners. Quoting Haydn he writes, "Mr. Brassey once cursed because he enjoyed too much happiness in this world." Tolstoy, having tasted of everything, has damaged his palate. Man pleases him not, nor does woman. In every book of his later, lonesome years he gives away

the secret of life's illusion, like the mischievous rival of a conjuror. It is not fair to the young ones who, with mouth agape, gaze at the cunning pictures limned by that old arch-hypocrite, Nature. The young man who has not had the courage to make a fool of himself some time in his career has not lived. Robert Louis Stevenson said this, and he said it better. Away with your cynics! Throw pessimism to the dogs! Let Tolstoy swear that the inverted bowl of the firmament is full of ashes, full of burnt-out stars; youth will see the bravery of the cosmical circus, its streamers, its mad coursing through eternity. The only way to help others is to help yourself!

So, despite his age, which is democratic, the aristocrat Nietzsche caught its ears; in the teeth of a religious reaction he preached rank atheism; and he opposed to altruism a selfless egotism. In a word, all his tendencies were set against those of his time; yet he has succeeded in attracting the attention of his contemporaries. Brandes is right in declaring that in some secret way Nietzsche "must have agreed with much of the tumult of modern thought."

In his Gay Science, — a mockingly ironic title for such a sad book, — Nietzsche wrote these sentences; as in a meteoric flare we realize the sickness of his prophetic soul. He alludes to his idea of Eternal Recurrence: —

How were it if, some day or night, a demon stole after thee into thy most solitary solitude, and said to

thee: "This life, as thou livest it now, and hast lived it, thou shalt have to live over again, and not once but innumerable times; and there will be nothing new in it, but every pain and every pleasure, and every thought and sigh, and everything in thy life, the great and the unspeakably petty alike, must come again to thee, and all in the same series and succession; this spider, too, and this moonlight betwixt the trees, and this moment likewise and I myself. The eternal sand-glass of time is always turned again, and thou with it, thou atom of dust." Wouldest thou not cast thyself down, and with gnashing of teeth curse the demon who thus spoke? Or hast thou ever experienced the tremendous moment in which thou wouldest answer him, "Thou art a god, and never heard I anything more divine"?

Frau Andreas-Salomé, whose book on the philosopher is interesting, though disclaimed by Frau Förster-Nietzsche, adds this illuminating commentary on Nietzsche's Eternal Recurrence doctrine:—

He struggled with it at first as with a fate from which there was no escape. Never can I forget the hours in which he first confided it to me as a secret, as something of whose verification and confirmation he had an unspeakable horror; he spoke of it only in a low voice and with every sign of the profoundest horror. And he suffered in truth so deeply in life that the certainty of life's eternal recurrence could not but be for him a thing to shudder at. The quintessence of the doctrine of recurrence, the radiant apotheosis of life which Nietzsche afterwards taught, forms so pro-

found a contrast to his own painful experiences of life that it impresses us as an uncanny mask.

And she further remarks: "Nietzsche contemplated the possibility that the theory might be scientifically deduced by physics from the doctrine of atoms." And here we are almost back to the orthodox belief in eternity. All thought moves circle-wise, and Nietzsche's ethical teaching is as old as Callicles in the Gorgias.

Nietzsche, then, is not such a revolutionary thinker. He is the perfect type of the old Greek rhapsodist, the impassioned rhetor, who with sonorous, beautiful phrases charmed and soothed his listeners as he pursued his peripatetic way. Sometimes the sound of what he says remains long after the memory of its sense has vanished. However, a perfect art or philosophy, or a perfect world itself, might soon grow monotonous. The ameliorating, if slightly hedonistic, philosophy of the Cardinal in John Inglesant comes back in pleasing sequence:—

There is no solution; believe me, no solution of life's enigma worth the reading. . . . What solution can you hope to find, brooding on your own heart, on this narrow plot of grass shut in by lofty walls? You, and natures like yours, make this great error; you are moralizing and speculating upon what life ought to be, and in the meantime it slips by you, and you are nothing, and life is gone. I have heard, you doubtless, in a fine concert of viols extemporary descant upon a

thorough-bass in the Italian manner, when each performer in turn plays such a variety of descant, in concordance to the bass, as his skill and the present invention may suggest to him. In this manner of play the consonances invariably fall true upon a given note, and every succeeding note of the ground is met, now in the unison or octave, now in the concords, preserving the melody throughout by the laws of motion and sound. I have thought that this is life.

To a solemn bass of mystery and of the unseen each man plays his own descant, as his taste or fate suggests; but this manner of play is so governed and controlled by what seems a fatal necessity that all melts into a species of harmony; and even the very discords and dissonances, the wild passions and deeds of men, are so attempered and adjusted that without them the entire piece would be incomplete. In this way I look upon life as a spectacle.

# IV

# LITERARY MEN WHO LOVED MUSIC

## THE MUSICAL TASTE OF TURGÉNIEFF

### I

Mr. Henry James, who is exquisitely aware of the presence of others, has written of Iván Turgénieff with astonishing candor. In his Partial Portraits a picture of the great, gentle Russian writer is slowly built up by strokes like smoke. There is much of his troubled melancholy, some of his humor, and, rare for Mr. James, distinct allusions to Turgénieff's attitude in the presence of the American-born novelist's work. Turgénieff cared little for criticism. It pleased him to know that his friends loved him and read his books. He did not read theirs; Mr. James admits he did not pretend to read *his*, though the older man confessed to having found one of the novels written *de main de maitre*. His heedlessness about himself and his affairs is proverbial. He was robbed of 130,000 francs, "a fairly large slice of his fortune," he writes

Flaubert, but has blame for himself, not for the dishonest steward of his estates. Like Flaubert, he was rich, very rich for a literary man, and like the author of Bouvard et Pécuchet, he was continually giving, eternally giving, said his Paris friends, indignant at the spectacle of both men denuding themselves of more than their surplus income.

There is no one alive who could give us such intimate souvenirs of Turgénieff as Madame Viardot-Garcia. He was the family friend, the closest companion, of her husband; it was an undisturbed intimacy for many years. His letters, the most eloquent, were written to Madame Viardot-Garcia, and to both he opened his mind about music. He knew Gounod, who often visited him and rolled about on his bear-skin rug when he was in the travail of composition. It was at Courtavenel, the country place of the Viardots, that Gounod met Turgénieff. Their liking was mutual.

Turgénieff knew the piano slightly, for he writes of his having played duos of Beethoven and Mozart with a sister of Tolstoy. He counsels, in a letter from Spasskoïé, Madame Viardot to work at her composition. This gifted woman, singer, and pianist, admired by Liszt, Heine, and half of Europe, occasionally found time to compose. "And now set to work!" cries Turgénieff. "I have never admired and preached work so much as I have since I have been do-

ing nothing myself; and yet look here, I give you my word of honor, that, if you will begin to write sonatas, I will take up my literary work again. 'Hand me the cinnamon and I'll hand you the senna.' A novel for a sonata — does that suit you?"

In an earlier letter he speaks of Russia "with its vast and sombre countenance, motionless and veiled like the sphinx of Œdipus. She will swallow me up later on. I seem to see her large, inert gaze fixed upon me, with its dreary scrutiny appropriate to eyes of stone. Never mind, sphinx, I shall return to thee; and thou mayest devour me at thine ease, if I do not guess thy riddle! Meanwhile, leave me in peace a little longer; I shall return to thy steppes." All his life passionately preoccupied with Russia, Turgénieff had the bitter misfortune of being discredited by his countrymen. Never a bard and prophet like Tolstoy, he nevertheless loved Russia and saw her weaknesses with as keen an eye as the other writer. Accused of an ultra-cosmopolitanism, wofully misunderstood, this great man went to his grave sorrowing because young Russia, the extreme left, refused him. If he was solicitous in advancing the names of Flaubert, Daudet, the de Goncourts, Zola, and de Maupassant, his zeal for rising talent in his native land led him to extremes. Halperine-Kaminsky and Mr. James say that he had always in tow some wonderful Russian genius,

poet, painter, musician, sculptor, or nondescript, who was about to revolutionize art. In a month he was hot on the trail of a new one, and his pains were usually rewarded by ineptitude or ingratitude. To paint him as an indifferent patriot, an "absentee" landlord, — his behavior to his tenants was ridiculously tender, — is an injustice, as unjust as the reception given Tschaïkowsky at the beginning of his career by certain of his contemporaries.

The friendship of Turgénieff and Flaubert was a beautiful episode in the history of two literatures. Alphonse Daudet spoke of it: "It was George Sand who married them. The boastful, rebellious, quixotic Flaubert, with a voice like a guard's trumpeter, with his penetrating, ironical outlook, and the gait of a conquering Norman, was undoubtedly the masculine half of this marriage of souls; but who, in that other colossal being, with his flaxen brows, his great unmodelled face, would have discovered the woman, that woman of over-accentuated refinement whom Turgénieff has painted in his books, that nervous, languid, passionate Russian, torpid as an Oriental, tragic as a blind force in revolt? So true is it in the tumult of the great human factory, souls often get into the wrong covering — masculine souls into feminine bodies, feminine souls into cyclopean frames."

These were the days of the "Dinners of the Hissed Authors," when Taine, Catulle Mendés,

de Heredia, Paul Alexis, Leon Hennique, Philippe Burty, Leon Cladel, Huysmans, Zola, Turgénieff, the de Goncourts, Flaubert, and de Maupassant gathered monthly and defined new literary horizons. There was plenty of wit, satire, enthusiasm, dreams, and theorizing.

Guy de Maupassant relates that "Turgénieff used to bury himself in an arm chair and talk slowly in a gentle voice, rather weak and hesitating, yet giving to things he said an extraordinary charm and interest. Flaubert would listen to him with religious reverence, fixing his wide blue eyes, with their restless pupils, upon his friend's fine face, and answering in his sonorous voice, which came like a clarion blast from under that veteran Gaul's mustache of his. Their conversation rarely touched upon the current affairs of life, seldom wandered away from literary topics or literary history. Turgénieff would often come laden with foreign books, and would translate fluently poems by Goethe, Poushkin, or Swinburne." He knew English; he knew Italian, German, and French. He was crazy over hunting — read his Memoirs of a Sportsman, miniature masterpieces — and crossed the Channel after good game in England.

"Life seems to grow over our heads like grass," is a phrase of his that is pinned to my memory. It was written to Flaubert, "the dear old boy," who might have profited by the other's

advice to cast theory to the winds and "do" something "passionate, torrid, glowing." And yet as Henri Taine says, Madame Bovary is the greatest literary performance of the century. Turgénieff did not always follow his own preaching; "my publisher keeps circling around me like an eagle screaming for *something*," he writes. Mr. James in a delicately humorous page wonders when Turgénieff found time to work. In Paris he was always at *déjeuner*— that gout of his was not acquired on wind. It was in Russia, where he went to bathe himself, as he puts it, that he took to long spells of toil. Turgénieff was most painstaking in the matter of technical references. He calls Flaubert's attention to an error in L'Education Sentimentale. Madame Arnoux is made to sing very high notes, though she is a contralto. This was not overlooked by Turgénieff, who, as a friend of Madame Viardot, naturally enough heard much good singing in her *salon.* The mistake is all the more curious because made by Flaubert, one of the most conscientious men in literature. In a burst, a most lovable one, the Russian bids Flaubert, who was either in the cellar or celestial spaces, "Cheer up! After all you are Flaubert." He writes from London, during the Franco-Prussian War, "We have hard times to go through, we who are born onlookers."

Rich as he was, but a charitable spendthrift,

Turgénieff was not sorry to inherit from his brother a legacy of 250,000 francs. It is a notion of mine that the richer a novelist the better his art. Poverty does not agree with certain geniuses. With composers who masquerade in the theatres money is a necessity. Without it their art never blows to a blossoming. Look at Wagner, at Gluck, for example, and then on the other hand consider that wretched, grimy Beethoven in mean Vienna lodgings, yelling as he composed in his deaf estate, the water he spilt slowly filtering through the crazy seams of a crazy man's floor! He lived in an ideal land, where clean napery and the pliant spine of the time-server were but encumbrances. Not so the novel maker, the architect of prose philosophies like Schopenhauer's and Flaubert's. Leisure, the leisure that feeds on a competence, is a necessity for these latter. Schopenhauer knew it, and, practical man, urged all philosophers to cultivate the wherewithal for leisure—money; and Goethe in the last book of Wilhelm Meister sets forth most admirably his idea of an artist's abode. Dickens and Thackeray, a great genius, a great artist, were forced to drive their pens for bread and cheese. Both fell short of the perfection achieved by Flaubert, Turgénieff, and Tolstoy, all three very wealthy men and tardy producers. The rule holds good for Balzac. The haste that kills all art was not thrust upon the other three by hunger, and we are the richer.

Your lyric poet, your symphonist, fattens spiritually on a lean life, but their brethren should have a bank account.

Turgénieff did not care much for Sarah Bernhardt: —

I could not know that my opinion on Sarah Bernhardt would become public property, and I am very sorry for it. But I am not in the habit of withdrawing my opinions, even when I have expressed them in a private and friendly conversation, and they are made public against my will. Yes, I consider M. A——'s criticism of her quite true and just. This woman is clever and skilful; she has her business at her fingers' ends, is gifted with a charming voice and educated in a good school; but she has nothing natural about her, no artistic temperament whatever, and she tries to make up for this by Parisian license. She is eaten through and through with *chic*, *réclame*, and pose. She is monotonous, cold, and dry; in short, without a single spark of talent in the highest sense of the word. Her gait is that of a hen; she has no play of features; the movements of her hands are purposely angular in order to be piquant; the whole thing reeks of the boulevards, of Figaro, and patchouli. You see that, to my mind, M. A—— has been even too lenient. You quote Zola as an authority, although you always rebel against all authorities, so you must allow me to quote Augier, who once said to me: "Cette femme n'a aucun talent; on dit d'elle que c'est un paquet de nerfs — c'est un paquet de ficelles." But, you will ask, Why then such a

world-wide reputation? What do I care? I only speak my own feelings, and I am glad to find somebody who supports my view.

But these *ficelles* are artistic to-day. Doubtless Turgéneiff would have been one of the first to recognize the unassuming realistic talents of Duse. There is nothing more touching than his adjuration to Tolstoy to forsake his half-cracked philosophy and return to literature: —

Very dear Leon Nikolaievitch: It is a long time since I wrote to you. I was then, and I am now, on my deathbed. I cannot recover; there is no longer the least chance of it. I am writing to you expressly to tell you how happy I have been to be your contemporary, and to make you a last urgent prayer. My friend, return to literary work. This gift has come to you from there whence everything comes to us. Ah! how happy I should be if I could know that you would listen to my prayer! . . . My friend, great writer of our Russian land, hear my prayer. Let me know if this letter reaches you. I clasp you for the last time to my heart — you and all yours. . . . I can write no more. . . . I am tired.

Tolstoy, on his side, could never understand Turgénieff's fear of death. He said: —

Some people wonder at Socrates who died and did not care to flee from prison. But is it not better to die consciously in fulfilment of one's duty than unexpectedly from some stupid bacteria? And I have

always been surprised that so clever a man as Turgénieff should bear himself as he did toward death. He was awfully afraid of death. Is it not even incomprehensible that he was not afraid to be afraid of death? And that darkness of reason was really astonishing in him! He and Prince D. D. Urusoff used to discuss religion, and Turgénieff used to dispute and dispute, and all of a sudden he would no longer be able to control himself, and would cover up his ears, and, pretending that he had forgotten Urusoff's name, would shout, "I won't listen any longer to that Prince Trubetzkoy."

And Tolstoy mimicked Turgénieff's voice until one would have thought the man was there in person.

Turgénieff first met de Maupassant in 1876. "A door opened. A giant came in — a giant with a silver head, as they would say in a fairy tale." Thus the younger describes the elder man. M. Halperine-Kaminsky has set at rest the disquieting rumors of certain alleged strictures upon his friends, said to have been made by Turgénieff in letters to Sacher-Masoch. Daudet finally declared that he did not believe their validity. "Turgénieff was not a hypocrite," he wrote to Kaminsky. The Slavic temperament is difficult of decipherment. Especially difficult was Turgénieff. The shining and clear surfaces of his art covered depths undreamed of by his Parisian friends. Mr. James speaks of his reservations and discriminations and "above all the great back garden of his Slav imagination and his

Germanic culture, into which the door constantly stood open, and the grandsons of Balzac were not, I think, particularly free to accompany him." M. Renan voices it better in his speech over the dead body of the great Russian. "Turgénieff," Mr. James translates it, "received by the mysterious decree which marks out human vocations the gift which is noble beyond all others. He was born essentially impersonal. His conscience was not that of an individual to whom nature had been more or less generous; it was in some sort the conscience of a people. Before he was born he had lived for thousands of years; infinite successions of reveries had amassed themselves in the depths of his heart. No man has been as much as he the incarnation of a whole race; generations of ancestors lost in the sleep of centuries, speechless, came through him to life and utterance." This one, said to be lacking in the core of patriotism, could write: —

"In days of doubt, in days of anxious thought on the destiny of my native land, thou alone art my support and my staff. Oh, great, powerful, Russian tongue, truthful and free! If it were not for thee how should not man despair at the sight of what is going on at home? But it is inconceivable that such a language has not been given to great people."

Prince Krapotkin in his Autobiography of a Revolutionist thus describes Turgénieff: —

His appearance is well known. Tall, strongly built, the head covered with soft and thick gray hair, he was certainly beautiful; his eyes gleamed with intelligence, not devoid of a touch of humor, and his whole manner testified to that simplicity and absence of affectation which are characteristic of all the best Russian writers. His fine head revealed a formidable development of brain power, and when he died, and Paul Bert, with Paul Reclus (the surgeon), weighed his brain, it so much surpassed the heaviest brain then known — that of Cuvier — reaching something over two thousand grammes, that they would not trust to their scales, but got new ones, to repeat the weighing. His talk was especially remarkable. He spoke, as he wrote, in images. When he wanted to develop an idea, he did not resort to arguments, although he was a master in philosophical discussions; he illustrated his idea by a scene presented in a form as beautiful as if it had been taken out of one of his novels.

Of all novel writers of our century, Turgénieff has certainly attained the greatest perfection as an artist, and his prose sounds to the Russian ear like music — music as deep as that of Beethoven.

Touching on the objections raised by the Nihilists as to the truth of the portrait of Bazaroff, Prince Krapotkin writes: —

The principal novels — the series of Dmitri Rudin, A Nobleman's Nest, On the Eve, Fathers and Sons, Smoke, and Virgin Soil — represent the leading "history making" types of the educated classes of Russia, which evolved in rapid succession after 1848; all

sketched with a fulness of philosophical conception and humanitarian understanding and an artistic beauty which have no parallel in any other literature. Yet Fathers and Sons — a novel which he rightly considered his profoundest work — was received by the young people of Russia with a loud protest. Our youth declared that the Nihilist Bazaroff was by no means a true representation of his class; many described him even as a caricature upon nihilism. This misunderstanding deeply affected Turgénieff, and, although a reconciliation between him and the young generation took place later on, at St. Petersburg, after he had written Virgin Soil, the wound inflicted upon him by these attacks was never healed.

He knew from Lavroff that I was a devoted admirer of his writings; and one day, as we were returning in a carriage from a visit to Antokolsky's studio, he asked me what I thought of Bazaroff. I frankly replied, "Bazaroff is an admirable painting of the nihilist, but one feels that you did not love him as much as you did your other heroes!" "No, I loved him, intensely loved him," Turgénieff replied, with an unexpected vigor. "Wait; when we get home I will show you my diary, in which I noted how I wept when I had ended the novel with Bazaroff's death." Turgénieff certainly loved the intellectual aspect of Bazaroff. He so identified himself with the nihilist philosophy of his hero that he even kept a diary in his name, appreciating the current events from Bazaroff's point of view. But I think that he admired him more than he loved him. In a brilliant lecture on Hamlet and Don Quixote, he divided the history makers of mankind into two classes, represented by one or the other

of these characters. "Analysis first of all, and egotism, and therefore no faith; an egotist cannot even believe in himself;" so he characterized Hamlet. "Therefore he is a sceptic, and never will achieve anything; while Don Quixote who fights against windmills, and takes a barber's plate for the magic helm of Mambrin (who of us has never made the same mistake?) is a leader of the masses, because the masses always follow those who, taking no heed of the sarcasms of the majority, or even of persecutions, march straight forward, keeping their eyes fixed upon a goal which they alone may see. They search, they fall, but they rise again, and find it — and by right, too. Yet, although Hamlet is a sceptic, and disbelieves in Good, he does not disbelieve in Evil. He hates it; Evil and deceit are his enemies; and his scepticism is not indifferentism, but only negation and doubt, which finally consume his will."

These thoughts of Turgénieff give, I think, the true key for understanding his relations to his heroes. He himself and several of his best friends belonged more or less to the Hamlets. He loved Hamlet and admired Don Quixote. So he admired also Bazaroff. He represented his superiority well, but he could not surround him with that tender, poetical love to a sick friend which he bestowed on his heroes when they approached the Hamlet type. It would have been out of place.

Although suffering from a cancer in the spinal cord, Turgénieff wrote to Alexander III, begging him to give Russia a constitution — this was in the autumn of 1881 — but of course to no pur-

pose. The man whose books helped to bring about the emancipation of the serfs died in exile, not even a prophet in the literature of his own country. Yet, because of their poets and prose masters Russia will one day be free, and then Turgénieff's name will be writ in golden letters as the artist, the patriot.

II

In 1868 he writes from Baden to Ambroise Thomas about a sketch made by Viardot for the libretto of an opera. Nothing, however, came of the matter. But only in the new letters translated by Rosa Newmarch, do we catch Turgénieff's opinion of the neo-Russian school of music. For the most part it is rather a contemptuous opinion and not pleasant reading for his contemporaries. He hated humbug, and the cry of young Russia, with its hatred of the sources whence it derived its inspiration, angered the writer. In correspondence with Vladimir Vassilievich Stassov we catch glimpses of the tempest brewing in the Slavic *samovar*.

"Have faith in your nationality," preaches Stassov, "and you shall have works also." "Russian individuality!" cries the contemptuous voice of Turgénieff. "What humbug, what blindness and crass ignorance, what willful disregard of all that Europe has done!"

He loved Schumann, naturally enough, this

Schumann, himself a dreamer of dreams. But Balakirew, Glinka, "a rough diamond," and the rest he would not have. He believed in the genius of the sculptor Antokolsky and in Tschaïkowsky and Rimsky-Korsakoff. I wonder if Tschaïkowsky and Turgénieff ever met? Probably they did, although I can find no reference in the correspondence. He listened to Dargomijsky, to Cui, to Moussorgsky, but could find nothing but "Slavonic barbarism" and "undisguised Nihilism." He loved the playing of Anton Rubinstein, but his operas — ! He writes Stassov in 1872: —

You are quite wrong in fancying that I "dislike" Glinka: *he* was a very great and original man. But come, now, it is quite different with the others — with your M. Dargomijsky and his Stone Guest. It will always remain one of the greatest mysteries of my life how such intelligent people as you and Cui, for example, can possibly find in these limp, colorless, feeble, — I beg your pardon, — senile recitatives, interwoven now and then with a few howls, to lend color and imagination — how you can find in this feeble piping not only music, but a new, genial, and epoch-making music. Can it be unconscious patriotism, I wonder? I confess that, except a sacrilegious attempt on one of Poushkin's best poems, I find nothing in it. And now cut off my head, if you like!

Of all these young Russian musicians, only two have decided talent — Tschaïkowsky and Rimsky-Korsakoff. All the rest, for what they are worth, may be put in a sack and thrown into the water!

Not, of course, as men — as men they are charming — but as artists. The Egyptian Pharaoh Rameses XXIX is not more utterly forgotten than these men will be fifteen or twenty years hence. This is my one consolation.

This prophecy is accomplished. A new generation has arisen in Russia.

Speaking of some piano pieces of Stcherbatchev he confesses to Stassov: —

Stcherbatchev, as a man, produces an unfavorable impression; but this need not imply that he is destitute of talent, and I should be very much obliged to you if you would send me his compositions as soon as they appear. By the way, you have no ground for fancying that Rubinstein will treat them with contempt; to me, at least, he spoke of Stcherbatchev as a very talented young man. . . . The day before yesterday I received a parcel containing two copies of the Zigzags. I have listened with the utmost attention to two consecutive performances of them, and the interpretation was excellent. To my great regret I have not been able to discover in them the merits about which you wrote to me. I cannot say whether in time original talent will show itself in Stcherbatchev, but at present I can see nothing in him but the "clamor of captive thoughts." All this has been written under the influence of Schumann's Carnaval, with a mixture of Liszt's bizarreries dragged in without motive. It is altogether lacking in ideas; is tedious, strained, and wanting in life.

The first page pleased me most; the theme is commonplace, but the working out is interesting.

For this you may chop off my head, if you please. I thank you, all the same, for your kindness in sending the music. . . .

In short, pray believe that if I find Mozart's Don Juan a work of genius, and Dargomijsky's Don Juan formless and absurd, it is not because Mozart is an authority and others think so, or because Dargomijsky is unknown outside his little circle, but simply because Mozart pleases me, and Dargomijsky does not. Neither do the Zigzags please me. That is the end of the matter! . . .

So not for one moment do I doubt the worthlessness (to my mind) of Maximov's pictures. I at once placed him in the same category as your favorites, MM. Dargomijsky, Stcherbatchev, Repin, and *tutti quanti;* all those half-baked geniuses filled with spiced stuffing in which you keep detecting the real essence.

He also speaks casually of Saint-Saëns and his wife.

Stassov sums up the matter this way: "Turgénieff, a great writer, was, as might be expected from a Russian, realistic and sincere in his own novels and tales; but in his tastes and views of art his cosmopolitanism made him the enemy of realism and sincerity in others. In such ideas and in such unaccountable prejudices he elected to spend his whole life."

Which proves that the Russian critic was

ultra-Russian in his view of Turgénieff. The new Russians are descendants of Chopin and Schumann and again Chopin. Few have attained to largeness of utterance, perhaps Tschaïkowsky alone. Men like Borodine and Glazanouw over-accent their peculiarities, and much of their music — when it is not sheer imitation — is but rude art. Rimsky-Korsakoff has fallen into the rut of cosmopolitanism, as did Rubinstein, indulging in supersubtleties of orchestral painting, and has never conceived an original idea. Turgénieff was right then, this man who loved Russia, loved her faults and dared to catalogue them in his beautiful novels. His art in its finish reminds one of Chopin's; there is vaporous melancholy, the vague sighing for days that have vanished and the dumb resignation, — the resignation of the Slav peoples. But his idealism was robuster than Chopin's and his execution of character hardier. Once at Flaubert's dinner table the talk turned on love. De Goncourt, I have forgotten which one, told Turgénieff that he was "saturated with femininity." The other answered: —

With me, neither books nor anything whatever in the world could take the place of woman. How can I make that plain to you? I find it is only love which produces a certain expansion of the being, that nothing else gives . . . eh? Listen! When I was quite a young man there was a miller's girl in the neighborhood of St. Petersburg, whom I used to see when out hunting. She was charming, very fair, with a flash of

the eye rather common among us. She would accept nothing from me. But one day she said to me, "You must give me a present."

"What is it you want?"

"Bring me some scented soap from St. Petersburg."

I brought her the soap. She took it, disappeared, came back blushing, and murmured, offering me her hands, delicately scented: —

"Kiss my hands — as you kiss the hands of ladies in drawing-rooms at St. Petersburg."

I threw myself on my knees — and you know, *that was the finest moment of my life.*

Like Chopin and Tschaïkowsky, Turgénieff was all love.

## BALZAC AS MUSIC CRITIC

While I think that George Moore's comparative estimate of Shakespeare and Balzac is a trifle more Celtic than critical, yet there can be no denial made to the assertion that Balzac stands next to Shakespeare — if not exactly on his level — in his astonishing fecundity of imagination. "A monstrous debauch of the imagination," Henley called the Human Comedy; but surely no more of a debauch than the Plays. All abnormal productivity of the intellect gives this impression. Look at Rabelais. There are over two thousand figures in the Human Comedy, all clearly characterized, no two

alike; and every man and woman in the work you might meet in a day's stroll about Paris.

Monstrous, yes; but so is Beethoven, so is Michael Angelo monstrous. All genius has something monstrous in it — something of what Nietzsche so happily called the over man.

Balzac's Gambara and Massimilla Doni — what genius he had for selecting names which outwardly and inwardly fitted his character! After reading the former I felt almost tempted into echoing Mr. Moore's extravagant assertion. Balzac is indeed a magician and not a novelist. What puts him apart from other novelists, even from his technical superior, Flaubert, is his faculty of vision. He is a *Seer*, not a novelist. Any motive he touched, whether usury or music-erotics or patriotism, he vivified with his prophetic imagination. He saw his theme concretely; he saw its origins, its roots in the dead past; and plunging his eyes into the future he saw its ghost, its spiritual aura, its ultimate evolution. Such a man as Balzac might have been a second Bonaparte, a second Spencer. He had science, and he had imagination; and he preferred to be the social historian of the nineteenth century, the greatest romancer that ever lived, and a profound philosopher besides. All modern novelists nest in his books, draw nourishment from them, suck in their very souls from his vast fund of spirituality. The difference between such a giant as Balzac and such a novelist

as Thackeray is that the latter draws delightful and artistic pictures of manners; but never turns a soul inside out for us. The best way to describe Balzac is to enumerate the negatives of his contemporaries and successors. All they lacked and lack he had in such amazing prodigality that comparison is not only impossible, it is brutal.

Balzac and music! Balzac and women! Balzac and money! Balzac and politics! Or,— Balzac and any subject! The encyclopædic knowledge, extraordinary sympathy and powers of expression — do they not all fairly drench every line the man wrote? He could analyze the art of painting and forsee its future affinities for impressionism — read The Unknown Masterpiece — just as in Gambara he divined Berlioz, Wagner, and Richard Strauss. I am quite sure that Wagner read Balzac. Gambara was finished June, 1837, and there are things in it that could only have been written about Berlioz. The key to the book, however, is passion, not any particular personality. Balzac always searched for the master passion in men and women's lives. Given the clew-note, he developed the theme into symphonic proportions. It is Andrea's love of intrigue that leads him to follow the beautiful Marianna, wife of the composer Gambara,—a fantastic creation worthy of Hoffmann. He is an Italian in Paris, who wrote a mass for the anniversary of Beethoven's death,

and also an opera — Mahomet. But that opera! Has such a score ever been dreamed of by any one except Richard Strauss? Gambara is a poor man, looked upon as a lunatic, living at an Italian cook shop kept by Giardini, — the latter one of Balzac's most delightful discoveries. Born at Cremona, Gambara studied music in its entirety, especially orchestration. To him music was a science and an art — fancy writers of fiction going into the philosophy of music seventy-five years ago! — to him tones were definite ideas, not merely vibrations that agitate nervous centres. Music alone has the power of restoring us to ourselves, while other arts give us defined pleasures. Mahomet is a trilogy, the libretto by Gambara himself — mark this familiar detail. It contained The Martyrs, Mahomet, and Jerusalem Delivered, — the God of the West, the God of the East, and the struggles of religions around a tomb. In this immense frame, philosophy, patriotism, racial antagonisms, love, the magic of ancient Sabianism and Oriental poetry of the Jewish — culminating in the Arabian — are all displayed. As Gambara says, "Ah! to be a great musician, it is necessary also to be very learned. Without knowledge, no local color, no ideas in the music." This irresistibly reminds one of a phrase from Wagner's notebook.

The story of the opera — too long to set down here — as told by Gambara, is wonderful. It has

the ring of an analytical programme to some new-fangled and heretical symphonic poem. Here is the curious medley of psychology, musical references, history, stage directions, cries of hysteria, and much clotted egotism. There is the clash of character, the shock of events; and it is well to note such a phrase as this: "The dark and gloomy color of this finale [Act I] is varied by the motives of the three women who predict to Mahomet his triumph, and whose phrases will be found developed in the third act, in the scene where Mahomet tastes the delights of his grandeur." Does this not forestall Wagner's Ring? or did Balzac really find the entire idea in Hoffmann's Kater Murr? Is not Kapellmeister Kreisler the first of his line? Now, while there seems to be far too much praying in this drama of soul and action, it is not such a farrago as it appears at first reading. I imagine that Balzac knew little of the technics of music; yet he guessed matters with astonishing perspicacity. His characterization of the megalomaniacal Mahomet, and his epileptic grandeurs would do as a portrait of most founders of new religions. Balzac had Voltaire to draw upon; but he makes the epilepsy a big motive in Mahomet's life,—as it is in the lives of the majority of religious geniuses and fanatics, from Buddha to the newest faith-curing healer.

And how was this extraordinary music and libretto received by Gambara's wife, her admirer,

and the Italian cook? "There was not the appearance of a poetical or musical idea in the stunning cacophony which smote the ears: the principles of harmony, the first rules of composition, were totally foreign to this shapeless creation. Instead of music, learnedly connected, which Gambara described, his fingers produced a succession of fifths, sevenths, octaves, major thirds, and steps from fourth without sixth to the bass, a combination of discordant sounds thrown at hazard which seemed to combine to torture the least delicate ear." I am positive, nevertheless, that it must have been great, wonderful, new music.

As the strange discords "howled beneath his fingers," Gambara, we are told, almost fainted with intoxicating joy. Furthermore, he had a raucous voice, — the true voice of a composer. "He stamped, panted, yelled; his fingers equalled in rapidity the forked head of a serpent; finally, at the last howl of the piano, he threw himself backward, and let his head fall upon the back of his arm-chair."

Poor Gambara! poor Kapellmeister Kreisler! And how much it all sounds like the early stories told of Richard Wagner trying to express on the treble keyboard his gigantic dreams, his tonal epics: and for such supercilious men and critics as Mendelssohn, Hiller, Meyerbeer, Berlioz, and Schumann!

Signor Giardini, the Italian cook in Gambara,

stands for a portrait of the true musical Philistine; he has a pretty taste in music, but melody, or what he conceives to be melody, is his shibboleth. Andrea Marcosini, a nobleman in pursuit of Gambara's wife, and a musical dilettante, finds Giardini a gabbling boaster. "Yes, your excellency, in less than a quarter of an hour you will know what kind of a man I am. I have introduced into the Italian kitchen refinements that will surprise you. I am a Neapolitan, — that is to say, a born cook. But what good is instinct without science? Science? I have passed thirty years in acquiring it, and see what it has brought me to. My history is that of all men of talent. My experiments and tests have ruined three restaurants established successfully at Naples, Parma, and Rome."

He keeps a little place where Italian refugees and men who have failed in the black, weltering symphony of Parisian life gather and feed at dusk. It is a queer, interesting crew. Here is a poor composer — not Gambara — of romances. "You see what a florid complexion, what self-satisfaction, how little there is in his features, so well disposed for romance. He who accompanies him is Gigelmi." The latter is a deaf conductor of orchestra. Then there is Ottoboni, a political refugee — a nice, clean old gentleman, but considered dangerous by the Italian government. A journalist is discovered at the table, the poorest of the lot. He tells the truth about the theatri-

cal performances, hence writes for an obscure journal and is miserably paid. Enter Gambara. He is bald, about forty, a man of refinement, with brains, — a sufferer in a word. Though his dress was free from oddity, the composer's appearance was not lacking in nobility. A conversation follows, merging into a debate, modulating angrily into a furious discussion about art. It is wonderfully executed.

The composer of romances has written a mass for the anniversary of Beethoven's death. He asks the count, with assumed modesty, if he will not attend the performance. "Thank you," responds Andrea. "I do not feel myself endowed with the organs necessary to the appreciation of French singing; but if you were dead, monsieur, and Beethoven had written the mass, I should not fail to hear it." It may be observed that this epigram has been remembered by several generations since Balzac. Von Bülow is credited with it. Behold the original in all its pristine glory! The deaf orchestra conductor also has his say: "Music exists independently of execution. In opening Beethoven's symphony in C minor a musical man is soon translated into the world of fancy upon the golden wings of the theme in G natural, repeated in E by the horns. He sees a whole nature by turns illuminated by dazzling sheafs of light, shadowed by clouds of melancholy, cheered by divine song." It is just possible that some one told Balzac of the inde-

terminate tonality at the opening of the Fifth Symphony, though he gets his scoring mixed.

"Beethoven is surpassed by the new school," said the writer of romances, disdainfully. "He is not yet understood," answered the count; "how can he be surpassed? Beethoven has extended the boundaries of instrumental music, and no one has followed him in his flight." Gambara dissented by a movement of the head. "His works are especially remarkable for the simplicity of the plan, and for the manner in which this plan is followed out. With the majority of composers the orchestral parts, wild and disorderly, combine only for momentary effect; they do not always coöperate by the regularity of their progress to the effect of a piece as a whole. With Beethoven the effects are, so to speak, distributed in advance." This is not bad criticism for a writer of fiction. Think of the banalities perpetrated about the same time by Henri Beyle, Stendhal, otherwise a master of psychology.

Then the Count Andrea proceeds to demolish the reputation of Rossini by comparing the "capering, musical chit-chat, gossipy, perfumed" school of the Italian master to Beethoven. "Long live German music! — when it can sing," he adds *sotto voce*. Of course there is a lively row, the host having much to say. Later Gambara shows Andrea his Panharmonicon, an instrument which is to replace an entire orchestra.

He plays upon it. They are all enchanted. Every instrument is represented. The total impression is overwhelming. Gambara sang to its accompaniment — in which the magic execution of Paganini and Liszt was revealed — the adieus of Khadijeh, Mahomet's first wife. "Who could have dictated to you such chants?" demanded the count. "The spirit," replied Gambara; "when he appears, everything seems to me on fire. I see melodies face to face, beautiful and fresh, colored like flowers; they radiate, they resound, and I listen, but an infinite time is required to reproduce them." It is a pity this man drank so much. There follows an admirable exposition of Meyerbeer's Robert le Diable too long for transcription. In the end comes ruin. Gambara's wife, tiring of his habits, his slow progress toward fame, leaves him for Andrea. Abandoned, Gambara falls into disgrace, into dire poverty. The Panharmonicon is sold by the sheriff and his scores sold for waste paper. "On the day following the sale the scores had enveloped at the Halle butter, fish, and fruits. Thus three great operas of which this poor man spoke, but which a former Neapolitan cook, now a simple huckster, said were a heap of nonsense, had been disseminated in Paris, and devoured by the baskets of retailers." Worse remained. After years Marianna, the runaway wife, returns, lean, dirty, old, and withered. Gambara receives her with tired, faithful arms. Together they

sing duets, with guitar accompaniment, on dusty boulevards after dark. Marianna makes Gambara drink cheap brandy so that he will play well. He gives bits from his half-forgotten operas. A duchess asks: "Where do you get this music?" "From the opera of Mahomet," replied Marianna; "Rossini has composed a Mahomet II," and the other remarks: —

"What a pity that they will not give us at the Italiens the operas of Rossini with which we are unacquainted! for this certainly is beautiful music." Gambara smiled! Thus ends the career of a great composer. Gambara knew his failings. "We are victims of our own superiority. My music is fine; but, when music passes from sensation to thought, it can have for auditors only people of genius, for they alone have the power to develop it." Here is consolation for Richard Strauss!

Massimilla Doni is dedicated to Jacques Strunz, at one time a music critic in Paris. This dedication, charmingly indited, as are all of Balzac's, acknowledges the author's indebtedness to the critic. Massimilla Doni is more violent and less credible than Gambara. The chief character is a musical degenerate, a morbid nobleman whose solitary pleasure in life is to hear two tones in perfect concord. This musical Marquis de Sade is described as follows: "This man, who is 118 years old on the registers of vice and forty-seven according to the records of the church, has but

one last means of enjoyment on earth that is capable of arousing in him a sense of life. Yes, all the chords are broken, everything is a ruin or a tattered rag; the mind, the intelligence, the heart, the nerves, all that produces an impulse in man, that gives him a glimpse of heaven through desire or the fire of pleasure, depends not so much upon music as upon one of the innumerable effects, a perfect harmony between two voices, or between one voice and the first string of his violin."

Certainly this evil-minded person would not care for Wagner. He is attached to a beautiful Venetian singer, Clara Tinti. It is she who tells of this horrid Duke Cataneo: —

The old monkey sits on my knee and takes his violin; he plays well enough, he produces sounds with it; I try to imitate them, and when the longed-for moment arrives, and it is impossible to distinguish the note of the violin from the note that issues from my windpipe, then the old fellow is in ecstasy; his dead eyes emit their last flames, he is deliriously happy, and rolls on the floor like a drunken man. That is why he pays Genovese so handsomely. Genovese is the only tenor whose voice sometimes coincides exactly with mine. Either we do really approach that point once or twice in an evening, or the duke imagines it; and for this imaginary pleasure he has engaged Genovese; Genovese belongs to him. No operatic manager can engage the singer to sing without me, or me without him. The duke educated me to gratify this

whim, and I owe to him my talent, my beauty, my fortune. He will die in some spasm caused by a perfect accord. The sense of hearing is the only one that has survived in the shipwreck of his faculties — that is the thread by which he clings to life.

This is a lovely study of a melomaniac, is it not? A man whose sole passion mounts to his ears; who when he hears an accord is vertiginously possessed like a feline over a bunch of catnip. As a foil to this delirious duke there is a cooler headed fanatic of music, named Capraja. He is a sort of Diogenes — never looks at women and lives on a few hundreds a year, though a rich man. "Half Turk, half Venetian, he was short, coarse looking, and stout. He had the pointed nose of a doge; the satirical glance of an inquisitor; a discreet, albeit a smiling mouth." For him the decorative is the only element in music worth mentioning. He goes to the opera every night of his life. Hear him: —

Genovese will rise very high. I am not sure whether he understands the true significance of music, or acts simply by instinct, but he is the first singer with whom I have ever been fully satisfied. I shall not die without hearing *roulades* executed as I have often heard them in my dreams, when on waking it seemed to me that I could see the notes flying through the air. The *roulade* is the highest expression of art. It is the arabesque which adorns the most beautiful room in the building — a little less, and there is nothing; a little more, and all is confused. Intrusted with the mission

of awakening in your soul a thousand sleeping ideas, it rustles through space, sowing in the air seeds which, being gathered up by the ear, germinate in the heart. Believe me ; Raphael, when painting his Saint Cecilia, gave music precedence over poetry. He was right. Music appeals to the heart, while written words appeal only to the intelligence. Music communicates its ideas instantly, after the manner of perfumes. The singer's voice strikes not the thought, but the elements of thought, and sets in motion the very essence of our sensations. It is a deplorable fact that the common herd has compelled musicians to adapt their measures to words, to artificial interests ; but it is true that otherwise they would not be understood by the multitude. The *roulade*, therefore, is the only point left for the friends of pure music, the lovers of art in its nakedness, to cling to. To-night as I listened to that last *cavatina*, I imagined that I had received an invitation from a lovely girl who, by a single glance, restored my youth ! The enchantress placed a crown on my head and led me to the ivory gate through which we enter the mysterious land of Reverie. I owe it to Genovese that I was able to lay aside my old envelope for a few moments, brief as measured by watches, but very long as measured by sensations. During a springtime, balmy with the breath of roses, I was young and beloved !

"You are mistaken, *caro* Capraja," said the duke. "There is a power in music more magical in its effects than that of the *roulade*." "What is it?" queried Capraja. "The perfect accord of two voices, or of one voice and a violin, which is the instrument whose tone approaches the hu-

man voice most nearly." Then follows a rhapsodic word duel between the old amateurs, each contending for his favorite form. And is it not, though purposely exaggerated, the same battle that is being fought to this very day between the formalists and sensationalists? Some of us adore absolute music and decry the sensualities of the music-drama. The war between the *roulade* and the accord will never end. "Genovese's voice seizes the very fibres," cries Capraja. "And La Tinti's attacks the blood," rejoins the duke. Then follows a remarkable descriptive analysis of Rossini's Moses in Egypt, by the wealthy and beautiful Duchess Cataneo, otherwise Massimilla Doni. It is cleverly done. The picture of the rising sun in the score in the key of C proves Balzac a poet as well as a musician. The prayer, so famous because of Thalberg's piano transcription, is also described, and at the end this opera — better known to us as an oratorio — is pronounced superior to Don Giovanni!! Balzac, Balzac!

There is a realistic account of a small riot in the opera house because Genovese, the tenor, sings out of tune. The Duke Cataneo rages monstrously, Capraja is furious. Both tone-voluptuaries are deprived of their accords and *roulades*. It turns out that the tenor is in love with the soprano, and once away from her presence proves his art by singing the air, Ombra adorata, by Crescentini. This he does at mid-

night on the Piazzetta, Venice. The Venetian scene setting is lovely. Genovese sings his sweetest. His listeners are rapt to paradise, but are tumbled earthwards when he asks in injured accents, "Am I a poor singer?" Listen to Balzac's comments upon that phenomenon called a tenor singer: "One and all regretted that the instrument was not a celestial thing. Was that angelic music attributable solely to a feeling of wounded self-esteem? The singer felt nothing, he was no more thinking of the religious sentiments, the divine images which he created in their hearts, than the violin knows what Paganini makes it say. They had all fancied that they saw Venice raising her shroud and singing herself, yet it was simply a matter of a tenor's *fiasco*." Most operatic music is.

The theory of the *roulade* is further explained: —

Capraja is intimate with a musician from Cremona who lives in the Capello palace; this musician believes that sound encounters within us a substance analogous to that which is engendered by the phenomena of light, and which produces ideas in us. According to him man has keys within, which sounds affect, and which correspond to our nerve centres from which our sensations and ideas spring. Capraja, who looks upon the arts as a collection of the means whereby man can bring external nature into harmony with a mysterious internal nature, which he calls an inward life, has adopted the idea of this instrument maker, who is at

this moment composing an opera. Imagine a sublime creation in which the marvels of visible creation are reproduced with immeasurable grandeur, lightness, rapidity, and breadth, in which the sensations are infinite, and to which certain privileged natures, endowed with a divine power, can penetrate — then you will have an idea of the ecstatic delights of which Cataneo and Capraja, poets in their own eyes only, discoursed so earnestly. But it is true also that as soon as a man, in the sphere of moral nature, oversteps the limits within which plastic works are produced by the process of imitation, to enter into the kingdom, wholly spiritual, of abstractions, where everything is viewed in its essence and in the omnipotence of results, that man is no longer understood by ordinary intellects.

The foregoing paragraph, rather inflated and tortuous in style, was thoroughly disliked by the great critic Sainte-Beuve, who never would recognize the great genius of Balzac, the romantic rather than the realist in this book. The composer referred to must be Gambara, for Massimilla Doni, after the death of the Duke of Cataneo, weds young Varese and assists the unfortunate Gambara in Paris. Massimilla Doni was finished May 25, 1839. Its concluding paragraph is a masterpiece of irony. After the love of Varese and Massimilla came the usual anti-climax. Balzac writes, in a passage of unexampled splendor: "The peris, nymphs, fairies, sylphs of the olden time, the muses of Greece, the marble Virgins of the Certosa of Pavia,

the Day and Night of Michael Angelo, the little angels that Bellini first drew at the foot of church paintings, and to whom Raphael gave such divine form at the foot of the Vierge au donitaire, and of the Madonna freezing at Dresden; Orcagna's captivating maidens in the Church of Or San Michele at Florence, the heavenly choirs on the tomb of St. Sebald at Nuremberg, several Virgins in the Duomo at Milan, the hordes of a hundred Gothic cathedrals, the whole nation of figures who ruin their shapes to come to you, O all-embracing artists — all these angelic incorporeal maidens rushed to Massimilla's bed and wept there."

Richard Wagner might have been a Gambara; and mark how Balzac treats the vibratory theory of sound, when it was practically unknown. Where did he gather his wisdom? Another story of his, hitherto untranslated, Sarrasin, will not bear recounting. Its psychology is morbid; yet it is stamped with probability. The great male soprano Farinelli could have been the hero. Nevertheless, the tale is not a pleasant one. George Moore eloquently describes how, in chase of the exotic, he pursued certain books, like a pike after minnows, along the quays of Paris. And like a pike he rudely knocked his nose one day against the bottom. The real lover of Balzac, pike-like, accepts Sarrasin, just as he accepts Seraphita. They are many octaves apart, yet both sound a

distinct note in the scale of this great human symphony. However, Sarrasin is but semi-musical, so need not be discussed here.

"O mighty poet! Thy works are not as other men's, simply and merely great works of art; but are also like the phenomena of nature, like the sun, the sea, the stars, and the flowers; like frost and snow, rain and dew, hail-storm and thunder, which are to be studied with entire submission of our own faculties, and in the perfect faith that in them there can be no too much or too little, nothing useless or inert; that the further we press in our discoveries, the more we shall see proofs of design and self-supporting arrangement where the careless eye had seen nothing but accident!"

Thomas De Quincey, master of the sonorous singing word, wrote this — he meant Shakespeare. It will also fit Balzac. And I know of no other name except Balzac's, that I dare bracket with Shakespeare's except Beethoven's.

## ALPHONSE DAUDET

"The entire work of Balzac pulsates with a fever of discovery and of impromptu." It was Alphonse Daudet, the little David of the south, with "the head of an Arabian Christ," who wrote that sentence, a sentence that might be aptly fitted to his own case. Daudet loved Balzac, loved Beethoven, and — this may be a

surprise for some — loved Wagner, knew Wagner. Why not? Style for him was a question of intensity, and what is Wagner if not intense? And Daudet was no mean critic. He could recognize the unchanging *moi* of Hugo, and the miraculous gift of transforming himself that gave to Balzac the power of multitudinous creation. He could speak of Georges Rodenbach as "the most exquisite and refined of poets and prose writers, moist and dripping with his Flemish fogs, a writer whose sentence has the tender effect of belfries against the sky and the soft golden hue of reliquaries and stained glass windows." Friedrich Nietzsche was "that admirable writer with a surprising power for destruction"; while in Ibsen's Wild Duck he found "the india-rubber laugh, the laugh of Voltaire congealed by Pomeranian sleet." The reading of Dostoïevsky's Crime and Punishment was a "crisis of his mind"; and for Tolstoy he always entertained a warm admiration. After Turgénieff died some alleged souvenirs of his were published and gave Daudet exquisite unhappiness, for he had loved the man and extolled the artist. M. Halperine-Kaminsky cleared up the mystery by proving that Turgénieff had never written the offensive paragraphs. They were really not of serious import, consisting of several free criticisms about the realistic group to which Daudet belonged. As I remember, Turgénieff is reported to have said that

much of the work of Daudet, the de Goncourts, Zola, and a few others smelt of the lamp. Yet this simple phrase caused Daudet pain, for he prided himself on his spontaneity of style, his freedom from use of the file. Possibly, Turgénieff — and this is pure conjecture on my part — knew of Daudet's opinions touching upon what he called "Russian pity, which is limited to criminals and low women." He named it a "sentimental monstrosity," and for that reason depreciated the "rousing fanaticism and actual hallucinations of the Russian Dickens" — Dostoïevsky.

But Alphonse Daudet and music! His son, Léon, tells us much in his filial memoirs. "His ear," says this pious and admirable biographer, "had a delicacy and correctness most exquisite. Thence came his passion for music, which was made an aid and assistance to his labors. He sits at his table in his working room. My mother is at the piano in the next room, and the music of Mozart, Beethoven, Schumann, or Schubert follows, one after the other, and excites or calms the imagination of the writer. 'Music is another planet.' 'I adore all music, the commonest as well as the loftiest.' But no man could analyze and understand better the masters of harmony, no man lauded the genius of Wagner in more splendid terms or more brilliant images: 'The conquest by Wagner and the philosophers.'"

Daudet often came home with wet eyes after a concert, and we are told that his voice was delicate and penetrating when he hummed the tunes of Provence. His intimate musical friends were Raoul Pugno, the pianist, Bizet, and Massenet. In later years Hahn, the "little Hahn," a composer of songs, often visited him, and he dearly loved the mad music of the Hungarian gypsy orchestras. We all recall his fondness for the pastoral pipe, and Valmafour, that thrice unhappy Valmafour urged in the pursuit of a hopeless fantastic love by an avaricious sister! I have often wondered who sat for the portrait of De Potter in Sapho. It was possibly a composite of Gounod, Bizet, and Massenet, though the figure of the love-stricken composer seems to fit Gounod better than the others—Gounod at the epoch of Georgiana Weldon.

That Daudet's ear for verbal harmonies was of the finest there can be no doubt, after reading this: "It seems that the phrase, as Châteaubriand uses it, has preserved the rhythm and movement of the sea; the rush of his crises comes from the farthest line of the horizon; their return is broad, quiet, majestic. Another example of sensitiveness to the period in writing, Gustave Flaubert, is the only one presenting, in the same degree as Châteaubriand, that verbal wealth which gives a sensuous satisfaction to one's mind when reading."

Of Wagner he said: —

Wagner was a phenomenon in this century just as he will be one in the time to come, and no one is more fruitful than he in remarks of every sort. . . . He was a man belonging to another age. Nevertheless, he found a way to our nerves and our brains far more easily than one would have thought. If imagination has representatives, he was one of the giants. A Northern imagination, it is true, on which all the beauties and faults of the North have left their impress. He insists, he insists with violence and tenacity, he insists so pitilessly! He is afraid that we haven't understood. That language of motives which he has imagined, and of which he makes such magnificent use, has the fault of leaving us very often with an impression of weariness. . . . Still, it was absolutely necessary for him to invent that system of motives. . . . (His characters seem clothed in sound.) . . . In Richard Wagner the imagination is so representative and violent that it saturates his work to overflowing with all the sounds of nature and leaves a limited space for the episodes. The passion between Tristan and Isolde plunges into the tumult of the ocean which overwhelms it; then it appears on the surface, then it plunges under again. One invincible power raises the waves and the souls by a single movement. In the poem, water, fire, the woods, the blossoming and mystic meadow, the holy spot become the more powerful characters. In this paganism of to-day all nature has become divine.

Wagner's pantheism has never been suffi-

ciently realized. For me his dramas deal with the elemental forces, rather than with men and women. Daudet evidently recognized this fact. Wagner was a pagan. The romancer says: "Your generation is accustomed to these splendors, this torrent of heroism and life, but you cannot present to your fancy the impression which that music exercised on men of my age. . . . There is everything in Wagner. . . . Turning his face toward Gayety he wrote the Meistersinger; turning toward Pain, Love, Death, the *Mutter* of Goethe, he wrote Tristan und Isolde. He made use of the entire human pianoforte, and the entire superhuman pianoforte. Cries, tears, the distortion of despair, the trickling of water over rocks, the sough of the wind in the trees, frightful remorse, the song of the shepherd and the trumpets of war — his tremendous imagination is always at white heat, and always ready."

Daudet wisely refuses to discuss Wagner's methods: —

Let his methods remain in the dark like his orchestra. . . . That imagination of his, feverish and excessive, has not only renovated music, but has also overwhelmed poetry and philosophy. Although theories disquiet me, still I feel them trembling in Wagner behind each one of his heroes. The gods talk of their destiny and of the conflict of that destiny with the destiny of men; they talk of ancient Fate in a way that is sometimes obscure, but with a rush and a go that make one forget to question

them. It is the famous wall of the Légende des Siècles, crowded with the tubas and the trumpets of Sachs, tumultuous and glittering in their mass.

It is quite possible that Wagner desired to have characters of a size suited to their surroundings, and that one would feel uncomfortable while considering ordinary men who should be victims of the Ocean of Tristan or of the Forest of Siegfried. What difference does it make? He succeeds in moving us with these superterrestrial passions. In Tristan humanity plays a larger part. These are our own wounds which are bleeding in the flesh of the lovers, wounds that the sacred spear, which the hero brings back with him, shall never heal.

It will be seen that these are the utterances of a man who has pondered music as well as felt it deeply. He knew Wagner, and was a welcome visitor at Wahnfried. "Daudet pleases me much," Wagner once said. The openly expressed admiration of this cultured Frenchman must have flattered the composer greatly. Because Daudet admired Wagner, his perception of Beethoven's greatness was not blurred. He puts the case succinctly: "It were better to say that the masterpiece by Beethoven being more concentrated and closely woven makes a total impression upon you in a much shorter time than does a drama with its necessary stops and changes of scenery and delays for explanation." This in answer to his son Léon, who had asserted that the emotions aroused by a Bee-

thoven symphony include "a deeper and rarer quality" than those evoked by the Ring.

The elder Daudet finds that Wagner is saturated by nature and nature's sounds: —

His orchestral parts cradle and swing me to and fro. His gentleness and power cause me to pass within a few hours through the most powerful emotions — emotions, in fact, for which no one can fail to be grateful forever to the man who has excited them, because they reveal our inner depths to ourselves. I love and admire Beethoven also for the wide and peaceful landscapes which he knows how to open up in the soul of sound. Italian music enchants me, and in Rossini I experience that extraordinary impression of melancholy anguish which an excess of life gives us. There is too much frenzy, too much movement; it is as if one were trying to escape from death. I adore Mendelssohn and his delicious pictures of nature in the Scotch and Italian symphonies. There are certain hours toward nightfall when the soul of Schumann torments me. . . . But to number them all would be to never end. I have lived through the power of music; I am a dweller upon its planet.

Now all this is quite satisfying when one realizes that Daudet, in his love for music, steps out of the French literary tradition. French writers, even those of this century, have never been fanatics for music, Stendhal and Baudelaire excepted — Baudelaire who discovered Wagner to France. I cannot recommend Stendhal as a musical guide. Châteaubriand, Victor Hugo,

Gautier, Alfred de Vigny, de Musset, Flaubert, Dumas *fils*, Zola, the de Goncourts — the brothers secretly abominated music — this mixed company was not fond of the heavenly maid. Catulle Mendès is a Wagnerian, and in his evanescent way Paul Verlaine was affected by melody. He wrote a magnificent and subtle sonnet on Parsifal. Perhaps it was what the despiser of Kundry stood for rather than Wagner's music that set vibrating the verbal magic of this Chopin of the Gutter. Villier de l'Isle Adam was another crazy Wagnerian, played excerpts on the piano, had his music performed at his own deathbed, and sketched in a book of his the figure of Liszt as Triboulet Bonhomet. Huysmans, of Flemish descent, has made a close study of church music and the old ecclesiastical modes in En Route and in several others of his remarkable books. The younger Parisian writers are generally music lovers.

How well Daudet understood that elusive quantity, the artistic temperament, may be seen in this bit of analysis: "Neither sculptor, nor painter represents anything which did not exist before in the world. It is somewhat different in regard to music. But, looking at things a little closer, music is the lofty manifestation of a harmony, the models for which exist in nature. Nevertheless the writer, the painter, the poet, the sculptor, and the musician, whenever their work bears them honestly along, believe honestly

that they are adding to the world something which did not exist before their time. Sublime illusion!"

On this clear, critical note let us leave the always delightful writer, the once charming man. "Oh, Daudet, *c'est de la bouillabaisse!*" cries the author of Evelyn Innes. Yes, but is not *la bouillabaisse* a fascinating dish, especially when a master *chef* has prepared it?

## GEORGE MOORE

### I

#### Evelyn Innes

There must be a beyond. In Wagner there is none. He is too perfect. Never since the world began did an artist realize himself so perfectly. He achieved all he desired, therefore something is wanting. — George Moore.

At last a novel with some intelligent criticism of music — George Moore's Evelyn Innes.

For years I have browsed amidst the herbage offered by writers of musical fiction, and usually have found it bitter and unprofitable. We all smile now at the inflated sentimentalities of Charles Auchester, and shudder at the mistakes of the literary person when dealing with musical themes. Jessie Fothergill's The First Violin is very pretty, but it is badly written and reeks of Teutonic *Schwärmerei*. The characters are

the conventional puppets of fiction armed with a conductor's stick and violin bow, instead of sword, cloak, and dagger. A novel dealing with genuine musical figures has yet to be written, so George Moore's Evelyn Innes is an attempt in the right direction. The book is full of faults, but at least it deals sanely with music, and contains several very acute criticisms of Wagner's music, acute without being too literary or too technical.

Whenever I read a novel by George Moore I feel like dividing the English-speaking world into three parts: those who read Moore and like him — a determined and growing class; those who read him and hate him — a very much larger class; and those who never heard of him — to this class belong the admirers of Marie Corelli, Hall Caine, and Sienkiewicz. Yet for certain young men every stroke of his pen has a hieratic significance. I remember well when the Confessions of a Young Man appeared. With what eagerness was it not seized upon by a small section of the community, a section that represented the vanguard of a new movement and recognized a fellow-decadent. George Moore may be truthfully called the first of the English decadents — I mean the Verlaine crop of the early eighties, not the gifted gang that painted and sonneted under the name of the Pre-Raphaelitic Brotherhood.

It was George Moore who first brought to

England's shores the "poisonous honey of France." In his Confessions were criticisms of acuity and several positive discoveries. He it was who introduced Arthur Rimbaud and Verlaine, Jules Laforgue and Gustave Kahn, to a public that speedily forgot them. To read these Confessions to-day is like stirring up stale musk. There is an odd comminglement of caviare and perfume in the book, and its author evidently had more to say.

He said it in A Mummer's Wife, one of the strongest, most disagreeable books I ever read. But, while the hands were Moore's, the voice was Zola's. Moore has always been the victim of methods. He has dissected Tolstoy, Turgénieff, Flaubert, Balzac, and the de Goncourts to see how they do the trick; and as he possesses in a rare degree the mocking-bird voice, his various books were at first echoes of his passionate delvings in the minds of others. A Mummer's Wife dealt with the English stage — certain phases of it. It was Zola Anglicized. Then followed the trilogy of brutal naturalistic novels, Spring Days, A Modern Lover, and Mike Fletcher, the last being the biggest. The writer exploited to the full his love for what he conceived to be the real, and there are certainly many telling passages in Mike Fletcher. To-day A Modern Lover is recognized as a very truthful study of artistic London, the London that paints and goes to picture galleries. The

new man — he was very new then to the younger men — had the gift of gripping your hand with chilly, withal powerful, fingers. He forced you to look at certain surfaces and see them the way he saw them. Because nature had imposed upon him restrictions, he strove earnestly to see more clearly, and by dint of hard gazing he did see, and saw some extraordinary things.

Having studied Germinie Lacerteux until he had mastered her, George Moore transposed her into the key of Fielding. His Esther Waters, by far simpler and healthier than the rest, is the Goncourts' gutter-martyr, Germinie Lacerteux, done into English. But it is admirably done, and the paraphrase became known to the novel-reading world. There was a brief silence, and Celibates appeared. And there were things performed within its pages that sent shivers to your stomach. An outrageous theme was fashioned superbly. One story was a recurrence to Moore's favorite subject, the Roman Catholic church. Whether he is a Catholic or not, I cannot say, but the church literally obsesses him. Her ritual dominates his vision, and, like a sickly woman, he loves to finger the georgeous livery of the Lord. He continually returns to this topic. He is exercised, almost haunted, by the notion that outside of her pale salvation is impossible. "What if this be true?" cries George Moore, as he arises from his mid-

night bed, fearing the dark and looking for some sign of a dawn! I suppose, being a product of our times, he enjoys this acrobatic flirting and balancing on the rope of faith swung over the chasm of doubt and despair. Religion is one of his leading motives, art the other.

The new story deals with several episodes in the life of a singer. She is the daughter of a devotee of archaic music and archaic instruments. She has a voice, but her father is so absorbed in the revival of Palestrina, of Vittoria, of old English writers, of the Plain Chant, that he neglects the girl's vocal possibilities. She plays the viola da gamba and sings at sight. Her mother was a celebrated operatic singer, of chaste life and *coloratura* tastes. She died before the girl was developed. The dreamy father, the high-strung, ambitious girl, a dreary home at Dulwich, near London, and a rich baronet of musical tastes, crazy for notoriety in London musical life,—and you may imagine the rest.

Evelyn goes to Paris with him — and with a certain Lady Duckle as a chaperon. The scene at Marchesi's — for of course Madame Savelli is Marchesi — is capitally done, and there is a Henry James lightness of touch and humor in the description of Lady Duckle and her dislike of Wagner's music.

"No, my dear Owen," she cried, "I am not a heretic, for I recognize the greatness of the music, and I could hear it with pleasure if it

were confined to the orchestra; but I can find no pleasure in listening to a voice trying to accompany a hundred instruments. I heard Lohengrin last season. I was in Mrs. Ayre's box —a charming woman — her husband is an American, but he never comes to London. I presented her at the last Drawing Room. She had a supper party afterward, and when she asked me what I'd have to eat, I said, 'Nothing with wings! . . . Oh, that Swan!'"

Now, this is distinctly witty, and it is a pity that we get only a mere sketch of this chatty body.

Without explaining the processes, Evelyn becomes a great singer, a great interpreter of Wagner; and it is precisely this hiatus that deprives me of much pleasure. I dislike these persons in fiction who have become full-fledged artists at the turning of a page. Mr. Moore was treading upon dangerous ground, and he knew it; so he wisely omitted the study years. Evelyn, whose character shows little growth, conquers London, and at last goes to her father to ask his pardon. This episode is the strongest and most original in the book. Indeed, I cannot recollect anything in English fiction like it. She falls at his feet and is Brünnhilde kneeling to Wotan. As she phrases her petition for pardon she acts, consciously or unconsciously, the third act of Die Walküre: "War es so schmählich?" she mentally implores, and the simple instrument-

maker is vanquished. It is very subtle, and the dual nature of the lyric artist is clearly indicated.

But such a father, such a daughter! If you were to ask me frankly if a girl could sacrifice everything for art I would as frankly reply, Yes; lots of them have. I have met a dozen myself. Moore does not believe that the moral sense can flourish in an artistic atmosphere. Perhaps he is right. Evelyn is dissatisfied with success. Her nature is too complex to find gratification in the society of Sir Owen Asher. A new man looms up. He is dark, has teeth, is a mystic, a Roscicrucian, perhaps a diabolist. He is a Celt and is composing to a Celtic legend a great music-drama; his musical forms are antique, and he wins Evelyn, after the first performance of Isolde. This scene caused all the bellboys of literature to cry "horrors!" I confess, however, that the second love is incomprehensible. It is entered into in too cold-blooded a manner. She becomes still more dissatisfied, and after a week of insomnia her early religious beliefs get the uppermost, and she goes to confession. But you feel that she has only met a third will stronger than her own. A Monsignor Mostyn, the best male portrait of the book, forces her to bend her knee to God, and she goes into conventual retreat. We get a few closing chapters —dreary ones — devoted to convent life, and then Evelyn goes forth once more into the world.

Her character is exceedingly well drawn, although I must protest against the overloading of page after page with elaborate psychologizing. Moore has deserted the brutal simplicities of his earlier manner for a Bourget-like shovelling of arid psychical details upon your wearied brain. The story becomes hazy, the main figure nebulous. At every step in the latter half of the book I detect Joris Karel Huysmans and his En Route. Evelyn Innes becomes a feminine Durtal, sick of life, afraid of God. There is too much padding in the shape of discussions about early church music — more Huysmans! Huysmans's practice of cataloguing is very monotonous. Yet it is the best thing in the way of a literary performance that George Moore has accomplished. The style is decomposed, but it is melodious, flexible, smooth, and felicitous. One can see that he knows his Pater.

Mr. Moore had used to advantage his knowledge of the London musical set. Mr. Arnold Dolmetsch may have sat for a portrait of Evelyn's father. Mr. Dolmetsch is a player on the harpsichord and spinet. But who is Evelyn Innes? That is a dangerous question. Possibly she is a composite of Melba, Calvé, Eames, and Nordica. Oddly enough, she gets a tiara, presented to her by the subscribers of the opera at New York! Of course this points to Nordica, but Nordica could never read music at sight,— you remember the one thousand piano

rehearsals for Tristan,— and so that clew is misleading. Perhaps the author may enlighten the musical world some day. Lady Grimalkin is certainly intended for Lady de Grey.

Sir Owen Asher—he may be one side of George Moore himself — is well painted in the beginning, but the colors soon fade. He is a bore, with his agnosticism, his vanity, and his lack of backbone. He treated Evelyn too delicately. A lusty reproof is what the young woman most needed. Her churchly, sentimental vaporings would then have been dissipated, and she might have thrown a clock at her admirer's head. Such things have been known to happen in the life of a prima donna. Sir Owen starts a Wagnerian Review. Could Mr. Moore have meant the Earl of Dysart? Ulick Dean is said to be drawn partially from Yeats, the mystic; but the music criticism sounds to me very like the doughty Runciman's. There is a manager with a toothache, who is almost funny, and there is a rehearsal of Tannhäuser, in which the question of cuts is discussed. Here is a sentence that reveals the depth of Mr. Moore's knowledge of music:—

"According to Mr. Innes, Bach was the last composer who had distinguished between A sharp and B flat. The very principle of Wagner's music is the identification of the two notes." Why? In the name of the Chromatic Fantasia, why?

I confess I am rather tired of convent scenes. The best I ever read in latter-day novels is in Mathilde Serao's Fantasy. Mrs. Craigie, in The Schools for Saints, "does" a convent, and now Moore. The Roman Catholic problem, too, is overdone. Mrs. Humphry Ward, in her polemical pamphlet which she calls a novel, Helbeck of Bannisdale, indulges in numerous speculations of the sort. George Moore loves the rich trappings and the pomp of ceremonial in the church. But its iteration is an artistic mistake. Indeed, his book goes off into mid-air in the latter half. The first is fascinating. The discussion of the various schools of singing is valuable, and while at no place does he exhibit the marvellous virtuosity displayed by d'Annunzio in his exposition of Tristan and Isolde, there are many jewelled pages of descriptive writing. The book is permeated with all manners of pessimism from Omar to Schopenhauer, and life is discussed from the viewpoints of the ascetic and the epicurean.

Mr. Moore is an artist. His vision is just, and he is a better workman than he was; his sense of form is matured, although his faults of construction are easily detected. He has caught the right atmosphere; he is still master of moods, and he has attempted and nearly succeeded in spilling out the soul of a singer for our inspection, — the soul of the selfish, ambitious prima donna, for there is no denying

that Evelyn, despite her tender conscience, was selfish and a fascinating creature, mastered by every passing whim, and a woman utterly incapable of developing mentally without masculine assistance. Mr. Moore, then, has given us the type of the opera singer, and I forgive him pages of solemn-gaited writing. Alas! that it should be as he writes. But it is. He says some things that go very deep, and there are many exquisite touches.

This novelist's attitude towards Wagner's music is well expressed in John Norton, the second of the three tales in that uncommonly strong book called Celibates. Here is another self-revelation: —

Wagner reminds me of a Turk lying amid the houris promised by the Prophet to the Faithful — eyes incensed by kohl, lips and almond nails incarnadine, the languor of falling hair and the languor of scent burning in silver dishes, and all around subdued color, embroidered stuffs, bronze lamps traced with inscrutable designs. Never a breath of pure air, not even when the scene changes to the terrace overlooking the dark river, . . . minarets and the dome reflected in the tide and in a sullen sky, reaching almost to the earth, the dome and behind the dome a yellow moon — a carven moon, without faintest aureole, a voluptuous moon, mysteriously marked, a moon like a creole, her hand upon the circle of her breast; and through the torrid twilight of the garden the sound of fountains,

like flutes far away, breathing to the sky the sorrow of the water-lilies. And in the dusky foliage, in which a blue and orange evening dies, gleams the color of fruit — dun-colored bananas, purple and yellow grapes, the desert scent of dates, the motley morbidity of figs, the passion of red pomegranates, shining like stars, through a flutter of leaves, where the light makes a secret way. And through all the color and perfume of twilight, of fruit, of flowers, cometh the maddening murmur of fountains. At last the silence is broken by the thud of an over-ripe fruit that has suddenly broken from its stalk. . . . Now I am alive to the music, all has ceased but it; I am conscious of nothing else. Now it has got me; I am in its power; I am as a trembling prey held in the teeth and claws of a wild animal. The music creeps and catches, and with cruel claws and amorous tongue it feeds upon my flesh; my blood is drunken, and, losing grasp upon my suborned soul, **. . . I tremble, I expire.**

## II

### Sister Teresa

Brainstuff is not lean stuff; the brainstuff of fiction is internal history, and to suppose it dull is the profoundest of errors. — George Meredith.

What makes Moore's case so peculiarly his own is his unlikeness to our preconceived notion of an Irishman. No man of genius resembles his countrymen; so we find Burke, Swift, George Moore, with few of the characteristics ascribed

to Irishmen and wits. They were and are not jolly world lovers, rollicking sports of the sort Lever loved to paint. Tom Moore and his rose-water poetry, Richard Brinsley Sheridan and his glossy smartness, hit the popular notion of what an Irish poet, playwright, and man of letters should be.

Now George Moore is far from being an Irishman in that sense — this prose poet who is at once mystical and gross. Yet he is a Celt, and lately he has developed a restless spirit, a desire to flee the Anglo-Saxon and his haunts. It is the "homing" instinct of the Celt — after forty years of age men of talent return to their tribe. And Mr. Moore is fast becoming an Irishman among Irishmen. Here is the newest incarnation of this feminine soul — perverse and feminine, he admits he is — which, waxlike, takes and retains the most subtle and powerful impressions. The readers of his early books knew him as a Shelley worshipper, then a digger among the romantic literature of 1830, finally a follower of Zola. So after Flowers of Passion (1877) we got Pagan Poems (1881), and with A Modern Lover (1883) began his prose trilogy, devoted to the young man. This was followed in 1884 by A Mummer's Wife, Literature at Nurse (1885), A Drama in Muslin (1886), Parnell and His Island (1887), A Mere Accident (1887), Confessions of a Young Man (1888), Spring Days (1888), Mike Fletcher (1889), Impressions

and Opinions (1890), Vain Fortune (1890), Modern Painting (1893), The Strike at Arlingford, a play (1893), Esther Waters (1894), Celibates (1895), Evelyn Innes (1898), The Bending of the Bough, a play (1900). He also collaborated in 1894 with Mrs. Craigie in a little comedy called Journeys End in Lovers' Meeting, which was written for Ellen Terry, and Untilled Fields (1903).

Mr. Moore was born in 1857, the son of the late George Henry Moore, M.P., of Moore Hall, County Mayo, Ireland. He was educated at Oscott College, near Birmingham, and studied art in Paris, so his expatriation was practical and complete. He once hated his native land and hated its religion. Yet I know of few writers whose books, whose mind, are so tormented by Catholicism. He may insult the church in A Drama in Muslin — one of the most veracious documents of Irish social history in the eighties — and through the mouth of Alice Barton. But, like the moth and the flame, he ever circles about the Roman Catholic religion. It would be unfair to hold a man responsible for the utterances of his characters, nevertheless there is a peculiarly personal cadence in all that Mr. Moore writes, which makes his problem, like that of Huysmans, a fascinating one. The George Moore of Mike Fletcher and the George Moore of Sister Teresa are very different men. Mike Fletcher, for me the first virile man in

English fiction since Tom Jones, may please some critics more than Evelyn Innes turned nun, for of Mike you could not say in Meredith's words: "Men may have rounded Seraglio Point; they have not yet doubled Cape Turk." Mike never rounded Seraglio Point; while of Evelyn, you dimly feel that she is always "fiddling harmonics on the strings of sensualism." Yes, George Moore is returning to the tribe; he is Irish; he is almost Roman Catholic — and the man is often more interesting than his books. Not to know them all is to miss the history of artistic London during the last quarter of a century.

In the preface of the English edition of Sister Teresa Mr. Moore writes: —

I found I had completed a great pile of Ms., and one day it occurred to me to consider the length of this Ms. To my surprise I found I had written about 150,000 words, and had only finished the first half of my story. I explained my difficulties to my publisher, suggesting that I should end the chapter I was then writing on what musicians would call 'a full close,' and that half the story should be published under the title of Evelyn Innes and half under the title of Sister Teresa. My publisher consented, frightened at the thought of a novel of a thousand pages — 300,000 words. The story has not been altered, but the text is almost entirely new. No one, perhaps, has rewritten a book so completely. I am aware that the alteration of a published text is deprecated in the

press, but it is difficult to understand why, for have not Shakespeare and Balzac and Goethe and Wagner and Fitzgerald rewritten their works? Among my contemporaries, George Meredith and W. B. Yeats have followed the example of their illustrious predecessors.

The latter half of the book is by no means so brilliant, or even so convincing, as the first. But then its psychology is much finer, and it was infinitely harder to handle. Evelyn was bound to taste convent life. Morbid, fatigued by Wagner singing, triumphs, social and operatic, by her two lovers, her stomach deranged by dyspepsia, her nerves worn to an irritable thread by insomnia — is it any wonder the golden-haired girl, with the freckled face, regarded convent life as a green-blooming oasis in a wilderness of lust, vanity, and artificial worldliness! You can see that her mother's spirit grows stronger in her every day, that mother with the cold eyes and thin lips who lost her voice so early in a great career. "The portrait of our father or our mother is a sort of crystal ball, into which we look in the hope of discovering our destiny." Evelyn was tired of love, above all of animal love which dragged her soul from God. Ulick, for that reason, was more grateful to her. He was a mystic, with the dog-cold nose of mystics, and he soothed Evelyn when Sir Owen had ruffled her with his

importunities, with his materialism. But these two men soon fade after the first hundred pages of the new story; indeed, they are lightly etched in at the best. "We have only to change our ideas to change our friends. Our friends are only a more or less imperfect embodiment of our ideas," says Mr. Moore. The feigned friendship of the two is a truly Flaubertian note. It recalls a trait of Charles Bovary. The convent of the Passionist Sisters at Wimbledon, however, is the glowing core of this remarkable tale. For nuns, for convents and monasteries, the life contemplative, this Irish novelist has always had a deep liking. There is John Norton in Celibates and there is Lily Young, who left a convent for Mike Fletcher, and then we have Agnes Lahens, whose only happiness was in a claustral life. At one time I believe that this writer would have indorsed Nietzsche's idea of a monastery for freethinkers. Didn't H. G. Wells suggest a retreat for a Huysmans sect? Evelyn Innes, like John Norton, dilly-dallied with her innermost convictions. It was long before she realized that faith is a gift, is a special talent, which must be cultivated to a perfect flowering. And when she left her lovers, when she left the stage, after her father died in Rome, — here the long arm of coincidence is rather unpleasantly visible, — when she had professed, taken the veil, and became Sister Teresa, her former life fell away from her

like water, and she was happy, a happy bride of Christ — until the honeymoon was over; for divine nuptials have their honeymoons, their chilly repulsions, their hours and days of indifference and despair. And this brings us to M. Huysmans.

Mr. Peck, in his admirable estimate of George Moore, — in The Personal Equation, — writes that Moore is frankly a decadent, frankly a sensualist of the type of Huysmans, whom he intensely admires. "A page of Huysmans," exclaims Moore, "is as a dose of opium, a glass of some exquisite and powerful liqueur. . . . Huysmans goes to my soul like a gold ornament of Byzantine workmanship. There is in his style the yearning charm of arches, a sense of ritual, the passion of the mural, of the window." And Mr. Peck adds: "Mr. Moore's affinity with Huysmans does not go further than a certain sensuous sympathy. He could never follow him. . . ." But he has followed him, followed En Route; Huysmans has not only gone to his soul, but to his pen. He once wittily wrote: "Henry James went to France and read Turgénieff. W. D. Howells stayed at home and read Henry James." This might be paraphrased thus: Joris Karel Huysmans, that unique disciple of Baudelaire, went to La Trappe and studied religion. George Moore, that most plastic-souled Irishman, stayed at home and studied Huysmans. This is the precise statement of a truth.

Mr. Moore owes as much to Huysmans for his Sister Teresa. To no one does he owe Mildred Lawson. She is as much George Moore's as L'Education Sentimentale is truly Flaubert's. I do not know of her counterpart in fiction; like Frédéric Moreau, that unheroic hero, she is a heroine who failed from sheer lack of temperament. And her story is one of the best stories in the language.

But with Sister Teresa the case is different. She is Huysmansized. Yet Mr. Moore has only used Huysmans as a spring-board — to employ a favorite expression of the French writer — for his narration of Sister Teresa's doings in conventual seclusion. He knew, of course, that he could never hope to rival Huysmans's matchless, if somewhat florid and machicolated, style, and it may be confessed at once that Sister Teresa is not so intense or so sincere a book as En Route. Nowhere, despite the exquisite resignation and Mozartean sweetness of Mr. Moore's thirty-eighth chapter, is there anything that approaches the power of the wonderful first chapter in En Route, with its thundering symphonic description of the singing of the De Profundis. Nor are Teresa's raptures and agonies to be compared to Durtal's in that awful first night at La Trappe, though the Irish writer follows the French one closely enough. But Moore is tenderer, more poetic, than Huysmans. He has so highly individual-

ized, so completely transposed, his character, that to him must only praise be awarded. As Russell Jacobus writes, in The Blessedness of Egoism, the secret of Goethe's self-culture is "the faculty of drawing from everything — experience, books, and art — just the element required at that stage of one's growth, and the faculty of obtaining, by a clairvoyant instinct, the experience, the book, the work of art which contains that needed element." This Mr. Moore has always done — he confesses to it, to the "echo auguries" of his young manhood. The color of his mind is ever changing. It often displays the reverberating tints of a flying-fish in full flight.

And his art has benefited by his defection from Zola. It has grown purer, more intense. As Huysmans says himself in La Bas, "We must, in short, follow the great highway so deeply dug out by Zola, but it is also necessary to trace a parallel path in the air, another road by which we may reach the Beyond and the Afterward, to achieve thus, in one word, a spiritualistic naturalism." Huysmans believes Dostoïevsky comes nearest to this achievement — as Havelock Ellis remarks — Dostoïevsky, who was once described by Mr. Moore as a Gaboriau with psychological sauce. But at that time he had not read The Idiot, The Gambler, or L'Adolescence. I find traces of the Russian novelists and their flawless art throughout Sister Teresa,

just as the externals of the book — of Evelyn Innes also — recall Flaubert in L'Education Sentimentale. There are many half-cadences, chapters closing on unresolved harmonies, many ellipses, and all bathed in a penetrating yet hazy atmosphere. Yet his style is clear and rhythmic. Mr. Moore tells of subtle things in a simple manner — the reverse of Henry James's method. The character drawing is no longer so contrapuntal as in Evelyn Innes. But the convent sisters are delightful — the Prioress, Mother Hilda, and Sister Mary Saint John. It would not be George Moore, however, to miss a tiny suggestion of the morbid — though I confess he has treated the episode discreetly. But here again has Huysmans anticipated him, and also anticipated him in Durtal's revolt against the faith, with his almost uncontrollable desire to utter blasphemies in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament. With a master hand — but always the hand of a master miniaturist — does Mr. Moore paint cloistered life, its futile gossiping, little failings, heroic sacrifices, and humming air of sanctity. There are pages in the book that I could almost swear were written by a nun — so real, so intimate, so saturated, are they with the religious atmosphere. And the garden, that nuns' garden! Whosoever has walked in the sequestered garden of a convent can never quite lose the faint sense of sweetness, goodness, spirituality, and a certain soft communion with

nature which modulate into the very speech and rhythm of the sisters. All this atmosphere Mr. Moore, whose receptivity is most feminine, brings into his perfumed pages. After the fleshly passion, the unrest, of Evelyn Innes, this book has a consoling music of its own.

It was after the convent doors closed that the real struggles of the singer began. Some of them have considerable vraisemblance, some of them are very trivial. The letters sent to Monsignor Mostyn, for example, are not credible; nor are Teresa's revolt and subsequent spiritual rebirth made quite clear. Perhaps Mr. Moore is not yet so strong a believer as Huysmans. His words do not carry the intense conviction of the Fleming-Frenchman, who from his retreat in a Benedictine monastery has given the world a vivid and edifying account of St. Lydwine de Schiedam, that blessed Dutch saint he speaks of in En Route, first attacked at the time of the plague in Holland. "Two boils formed, one under her arm, the other above the heart. 'Two boils, it is well,' she said to the Lord, 'but three would be better in honor of the Holy Trinity,' and immediately a third pustule broke out on her face." This extraordinary mystic considered herself as an expiatory victim for all the sins of the earth. Her sufferings were finally rewarded. Like John Bunyan, she died a "comfortable and triumphant death." A writer of Huysmans's magnificent artistry,

who can thus transform himself into an humble hagiographer, must indeed have forsworn his ways and become impregnated by faith.

Mr. Moore does not succeed in arousing any such poignant and unpleasant impressions. Notwithstanding his array of mystical learning, his familiarity with the writings of Rüysbroeck, John of the Cross, Saint Teresa, Catharine Emmerich, Saint Angela, and the rest, one cannot escape the conviction that it is not all deeply felt. Count S. C. de Soissons writes: "He who praises the lasciviousness of Alcibiades does not enjoy the pleasure that he had; neither do they experience the mystic ecstasies of the anchorites of the Thebaid who try to parody their saintly lives." Even the striking account of the Carmelite's profession in Sister Teresa is paralleled in En Route. There is not so much music talk as in Evelyn Innes, for she leaves its world of vain and empty sonorities. This much I found in an early chapter. "In Handel there are beautiful proportions; it is beautiful like eighteenth-century architecture, but here I can discover neither proportion nor design." Moore referred to a Brahms score, which is manifestly absurd. Whatever else there may be in Brahms, we are sure to discover proportion, design. Again, "She remembered that César Franck's music affected her in much the same way." Shrugging her shoulders, she said, "When I listen I always hear some-

thing beautiful, only I don't listen." I fear Mr. Moore has succumbed again to the blandishing voice of Ulick Dean Runciman!

And how does it all end, the psychic adventures of this Wagner singer turned nun, this woman who "discovered two instincts in herself — an inveterate sensuality and a sincere aspiration for a spiritual life"? She loses her voice, like her mother, and after relinquishing all idea of escaping from the convent — not a well-developed motive — she settles down to teaching voice and piano. Sir Owen Asher no longer troubles her; Ulick Dean has evaporated, or perhaps crumbled to dust, like an unheeding Brann if he had touched the early shores of real life. No one from the outside world visits her but Louise, Mlle. Helbrun, the Brangaene of her Tristan and Isolde days. To the evanescent bell booming of their distant past goes the conversation of the friends. It is not so depressingly real, not so moving, as the last words of Frédéric Moreau and Deslauriers in the coda to L'Education Sentimentale, — that most perfect of fictions, — but is melancholy enough. "Our fate is more like ourselves than we are aware," and in the last analysis Evelyn's fate suits her. As a singer she talked too much like a music critic; as Sister Teresa, too much like a sophist in a nun's habit. She was from the start a female theologian. Her conscience was more to her than her lovers. She was

never quite in earnest, always a little inhuman, and I for one can contemplate with equanimity her immurement until her final "packing up" for death and its dusty hypnotism. After reading the story I was tempted to repeat Renan's remarks on Amiel, — quoted by Ernest Newman in his Wagner, — "He speaks of sin, of salvation, of redemption, and conversion, as if these things were realities." I wonder if Mr. Moore did not feel that way sometimes!

But the book is full of brainstuff. It is also a book with a soul. In it George Moore's art is come to a spiritual and consummate blossoming. After reading such a passage of sustained music as the following I am almost inclined to make an expiatory pilgrimage to the drab city on the Liffey, to make of Dublin a critic's Canossa; and in the heated, mean streets, and in sable habiliments of sorrow, beat my breast without Mr. Moore's abode, crying aloud, "Peccavi." But would I be forgiven for all that I have said about the noble, morbid, disquieting, and fascinating art of George Moore, the Irish Huysmans? Here is a passage executed with incomparable bravura. Ulick Dean speaks: —

To keep her soul he said she must fly from the city, where men lose their souls in the rituals of materialism. He must go with her to the pure country, to the woods and to the places where the invisible ones whom the Druids knew ceaselessly ascend and descend from earth

to heaven, and from heaven to earth, in flame-colored spirals. He told her he knew of a house by a lake shore, and there they might live in communion with nature, and in the fading lights, and in the quiet hollows of the woods she would learn more of God than she could in the convent. In that house they would live ; and their child, if the gods gave them one, would unfold among the influences of music and love and song traditions.

It was writing of a similar order in Mildred Lawson that evoked from Harry Thurston Peck the declaration : "George Moore is the greatest literary artist who has struck the chords of English since the death of Thackeray." George Moore always had the voice. He has now both voice and vision.

# V

# ANARCHS OF ART

## A SONNET BY CAMPANELLA

The people is a beast of muddy brain
That knows not its own strength, and therefore stands
Loaded with wood and stone; the powerless hands
Of a mere child guide it with bit and rein;
One kick would be enough to break the chain.
But the beast fears, and what the child demands
It does; nor its own terror understands,
Confused and stupefied by bugbears vain.
Most wonderful! With its own hand it ties
And gags itself — gives itself death and war
For pence doled out by kings from its own store.
Its own are all things between earth and heaven;
But this it knows not; and if one arise
To tell this truth, it kills him unforgiven.

— *Translated by* JOHN ADDINGTON SYMONDS.

HAVE not all great composers been anarchs —from Bach to Strauss? At first blush the hard-plodding Johann Sebastian of the Well-tempered Clavichord seems a doubtful figure to drape with the black flag of revolt. He grew a forest of children, he worked early and late, and he played the organ in church of Sundays; but he was a musical revolutionist nevertheless.

His music proves it. And he quarrelled with his surroundings like any good social democrat. He even went out for a drink during a prosy sermon, and came near being discharged for returning late. If Lombroso were cognizant of this suspicious fact, he might build a terrifying structure of theories, with all sorts of inferential subcellars. However, it is Bach's music that still remains revolutionary. Mozart and Gluck depended too much on aristocratic patronage to play the rôle of Solitaries. But many tales are related of their refusal to lick the boots of the rich, to curve the spine of the suppliant. Both were by nature gentle men, and both occasionally arose to the situation and snubbed their patrons outrageously. Handel! A fighter, a born revolutionist, a hater of rulers. John Runciman — himself an anarchistic critic — calls Handel the most magnificent man that ever lived. He was certainly the most virile among musicians.

I recall the story of Beethoven refusing to uncover in the presence of royalty, though his companion, Goethe, doffed his hat. Theoretically I admire Beethoven's independence, yet there is no denying that the great poet was the politer of the two, and doubtless a pleasanter man to consort with. The mythic William Tell and his contempt for Gessler's hat were translated into action by the composer.

Handel, despite the fact that he could not boast Beethoven's peasant ancestry, had a contempt

for rank and its entailed snobberies, that was remarkable. And his music is like a blow from a muscular fist. Haydn need not be considered. He was henpecked, and for the same reason as was Socrates. The Croatian composer's wife told some strange stories of that merry little blade, her chamber-music husband. As I do not class Mendelssohn among the great composers, he need not be discussed. His music was Bach watered for general consumption. Schubert was an anarch all his short life. He is said to have loved an Esterhazy girl, and being snubbed he turned sour-souled. He drank "far more than was good for him," and he placed on paper the loveliest melodies the world has ever heard. Beethoven was the supreme anarch of art, and put into daily practice the radicalism of his music.

Because of its opportunities for soul expansion, music has ever attracted the strong free sons of earth. The most profound truths, the most blasphemous things, the most terrible ideas, may be incorporated within the walls of a symphony, and the police be none the wiser. Suppose that some Russian professional supervisor of artistic anarchy really knew what arrant doctrines Tschaïkowsky preached! It is its freedom from the meddlesome hand of the censor that makes of music a playground for great brave souls. Richard Wagner in Siegfried, and under the long nose of royalty, preaches anarchy,

puts into tone, words, gestures, lath, plaster, paint, and canvas an allegory of humanity liberated from the convention of authority, from what Bernard Shaw would call the Old Man of the Mountain, the Government.

I need only adduce the names of Schumann, another revolutionist like Chopin in the psychic sphere; Liszt, bitten by the Socialistic theories of Saint-Simon, a rank hater of conventions in art, though in life a silken courtier; Brahms, a social democrat and freethinker; and Tschaïkowsy, who buried more bombs in his work than ever Chopin with his cannon among roses or Bakounine with his terrible prose of a nihilist. Years ago I read and doubted Mr. Ashton-Ellis's interesting "1849," with its fallacious denial of Wagner's revolutionary behavior. Wagner may not have shouldered a musket during the Dresden uprising, but he was, with Michael Bakounine, its prime inspirer. His very ringing of the church bells during the row is a symbol of his attitude. And then he ran away, luckily enough for the world of music, while his companions, Roeckel and Bakounine, were captured and imprisoned. Wagner might be called the Joseph Proudhon of composers — his music is anarchy itself, coldly deliberate like the sad and logical music we find in the great Frenchman's Philosophy of Misery (a subtitle, by the way).

And what a huge regiment of painters, poets, sculptors, prosateurs, journalists, and musicians

might not be included under the roof of the House Beautiful! Verhaeren of Belgium, whose powerful bass hurls imprecations at the present order; Georges Eckhoud, Maurice Maeterlinck; Constantin Meunier, whose eloquent bronzes are a protest against the misery of the proletarians; Octave Mirbeau, Richepin, William Blake, William Morris, Swinburne, Maurice Barrès, the late Stéphane Mallarmé, Walt Whitman, Ibsen, Strindberg; Felicien Rops, the sinister author of love and death; Edvard Munch, whose men and women with staring eyes and fuliginous faces seem to discern across the frame of his pictures febrile visions of terror; and the great Scandinavian sculptors, Vigeland and Sinding; and Zola, Odilon Redon, Huysmans, Heine, Baudelaire, Poe, Richard Strauss, Shaw, — is not the art of these men, and many more left unnamed, direct personal expression of anarchic revolt?

Przybyszewski asserts that physicians do not busy themselves with history; if they did, they would know that decadence has always existed; that it is not decadence at all, but merely a phase of development as important as normality: Normality is stupidity, decadence is genius! Is there, he asks, a more notable case of the abnormal than the prophet of Protestantism, Martin Luther?

They are all children of Satan, he cries, those great ones who for the sake of the idea sacrifice

the peace of thousands, as Alexander and Napoleon; or those who spoil the dreams of youth, Socrates and Schopenhauer; or those who venture into the depths and love sin because only sin has depth, Poe and Rops; and those who love pain for the sake of pain and ascend the Golgotha of mankind, Chopin and Schumann. Satan was the first philosopher, the first anarchist; and pain is at the bottom of all art, and with Satan, the father of illusions! It is wise to stop here, else might we become entangled in a Miltonic genealogy of the angels. I give the foregoing list to show how easy it is to twist a theory to one's own point of view. The decadence theory is silly; and equally absurd is Przybyszewski's idea that the normal is the stupid. This Pole seems anything but normal or stupid. He now writes plays in the Strindberg style; formerly he lectured on Chopin, and played the F sharp minor polonaise — he was possessed by the key of F sharp minor, and saw "soul-states" whenever a composer wrote in that tonality! *Audition colorée*, this?

Nor is there cause for alarm in the word anarchy, which means in its ideal state unfettered self-government. If we all were self-governed governments would be sinecures. Anarchy often expresses itself in rebellion against conventional art forms — the only kind of anarchy that interests me. A most signal example is Henry James. Surprising it is to find this fastidious

artist classed among the anarchs of art, is it not? He is one, as surely as was Turgénieff, the de Goncourts, or Flaubert. The novels of his later period, — What Maisie Knew, The Wings of a Dove, The Ambassadors, The Better Sort, The Sacred Fount, The Awkward Age, and the rest, — do they not all betray the revolution of Henry James from the army of the conventional? He will be no dull realist or flamboyant romantic or desiccated idealist. Every book he has written, from The Lesson of the Master and The Pattern in the Carpet, is at once a personal confession and a declaration of artistic independence. Subtle Henry James among the revolutionists! Yes, it is even so. He has seceded forever from the army of English tradition, from Brontë, Eliot, Dickens, and Thackeray. He may be the discoverer of the fiction of the future.

The fiction of the future! It is an idea that propounds itself after reading The Wings of the Dove. Here at last is companion work to the modern movement in music, sculpture, painting. Why prose should lag behind its sister arts I do not know; possibly because every drayman and pothouse politician is supposed to speak it. But any one who has dipped into that well of English undefiled, the seventeenth-century literature, must realize that to-day we write parlous and bastard prose. It is not, however, splendid,

stately, rhythmic prose that Mr. James essays or ever has essayed. For him the "steam-dried style" of Pater, as Brander Matthews cruelly calls it, has never offered attractions. The son of a metaphysician and moralist, — I once fed full on Henry James, senior, — the brother of that most brilliant psychologist, William James, of Harvard, it need hardly be said that character problems are of more interest to this novelist than are the external qualities of rhetorical sonority, the glow and fascination of surfaces. Reared upon the minor moralities of Hawthorne, and ever an interested, curious observer of manners, the youthful James wrote books which pictured in his own exquisite orchestra of discreet tints and delicate grays the gestures, movements, and thoughts of many persons, principally those of travelled Americans. He pinned to the printed page a pronounced type in his Daisy Miller, and shall we ever forget his Portrait of a Lady, the Princess Cassimassima, — the latter not without a touch of one of Turgénieff's bewilderingly capricious heroines. It is from the great, effortless art of the Russian master that Mr. James mainly derives. But Turgénieff represented only one form of influence, and not a continuing one. Hawthorne it was in whom Mr. James first planted his faith; the feeling that Hawthorne's love of the moral problem still obsesses the living artist is not missed in his newer books. The Puritan lurks in James, though a Puritan tem-

pered by culture, by a humanism only possible in this age. Mr. James has made the odious word, and still more odious quality of cosmopolitanism, a thing of rare delight. In his newer manner, be it never so cryptic, his Americans abroad suffer a rich sea change, and from Daisy Miller to Milly Theale is the chasm of many years of temperamental culture. We wonder if the American girl has so changed, or whether the difference lies with the author; whether he has readjusted his point of vantage with the flight of time; or if Daisy Miller was but a bit of literary illusion, the *pia fraus* of an artist's brain. Perhaps it is her latest sister, Milly, whose dovelike wings hover about the selfish souls of her circle, that is the purer embodiment of an artistic dream.

The question that most interests me is the one I posed at the outset: Is this to be the fiction of the future, are The Wings of a Dove or The Ambassadors — the latter is a marvellous illusion — and studies of the like to be considered as prose equivalents of such moderns as Whistler, Monet, Munch, Debussy, Rodin, Richard Strauss, and the rest? In latter-day art the tendency to throw overboard superfluous baggage is a marked one. The James novel is one of grand simplifications. As the symphony has been modified by Berlioz and Liszt until it assumed the shape of the symphonic poem, and was finally made over into the guise of the tone-poem by Richard

Strauss, so the novel of manners of the future must stem from Flaubert's Sentimental Education or else remain an academic imitation, a replica of Thackeray or of George Eliot's inelastic moulds. Despite its length — "heavenly," as Schumann would say — Sentimental Education contains in solution all that the newer novelists have since accomplished. Zola has clumsily patterned after it, Daudet found there his impressionism anticipated. All the new men, Maupassant, Huysmans, Loti, Barrès, Mirbeau, and others, discovered in this cyclopædic man what they needed; for if Flaubert is the father of realism he is also a parent of symbolism. His excessive preoccupation with style and his attaching esoteric significance to his words sound the note of symbolism. Mr. James dislikes Sentimental Education, yet he has not failed to benefit by the radical formal changes Flaubert introduced in his novel, changes more revolutionary than Wagner's in the music-drama. I call the James novel a simplification. All the conventional chapter endings are dispensed with; many are suspended cadences. All barren modulations from event to event are swept away — unprepared dissonances are of continual occurrence. There is no descriptive padding — that bane of second-class writers; nor are we informed at every speech of a character's name. The elliptical method James has absorbed from Flaubert; his oblique psychology is his own. All this

makes difficult reading for the reader accustomed to the cheap hypnotic passes of fiction mediums. Nothing is forestalled, nothing is obvious, and one is forever turning the curve of the unexpected; yet while the story is trying in its bareness, the situations are not abnormal. You rub your eyes when you finish, for with all your attention, painful in its intensity, you have witnessed a pictorial evocation; both picture and evocation wear magic in their misty attenuations. And there is always the triumph of poetic feeling over mere sentiment. Surely Milly Theale is the most exquisite portrait in his gallery of exquisite portraiture. Her life is a miracle, and her ending supreme art. The entire book is filled with the faintly audible patter of destiny's tread behind the arras of life, of microphonic reverberations, of a crescendo that sets your soul shivering long before the climax. It is all art in the superlative, the art of Jane Austen raised to the *n*th degree, superadded to Mr. James's implacable curiosity about causes final. The question whether his story is worth telling is a critical impertinence too often uttered; what most concerns us is his manner in the telling.

The style is a jungle of inversions, suspensions, elisions, repetitions, echoes, transpositions, transformations, neologisms, in which the heads of young adjectives gaze despairingly and from afar at verbs that come thundering in Teutonic

fashion at the close of sentences leagues long. It is all very bewildering, but more bewildering is the result when you draft out in smooth, journalistic style this peculiarly individual style. Nothing remains; Mr. James has not spoken; his dissonances cannot be resolved except by his own matchless art. In a word, his meanings evaporate when phrased in our vernacular. This may prove a lot of negating things and it may not. Either way it is not to the point. And yet the James novels may be the fiction of the future; a precursor of the book our children and grandchildren will enjoy when all the hurly-burly of noisy adventure, of cheap historical tales and still cheaper drawing-room struttings shall have vanished. A deeper notation, a wider synthesis will, I hope, be practised. In an illuminating essay Arthur Symons places Meredith among the decadents, the dissolvers of their mother speech, the men who shatter syntax to serve their artistic purposes. Henry James has belonged to this group for a longer time than any of his critics have suspected; French influences, purely formal, however, have modified his work into what it now is, what the critical men call his "third manner." In his ruthless disregard for the niceties and conventionalities of sentence structure I see, or seem to see, the effect of the Goncourts, notably in Madame Gervaisais. No matter how involved and crabbed appears his page, a character emerges from the

smoke of muttered enchantments. The chiefest fault is that his characters always speak in purest Jamesian. So do Balzac's people. So do Dickens's and Meredith's. It is the fault, or virtue, of all subjective genius. Yet in his obliteration of self James recalls Flaubert; like the wind upon the troubled waters, his power is sensed rather than seen.

I have left Berlioz and Strauss for the last. The former all his life long was a flaming individualist. His books, his utterances, his conduct, prove it. Hector of the Flaming Locks, fiery speech, and crimson scores, would have made a picturesque figure on the barricades waving a red flag or casting bombs. His Fantastic Symphony is full of the tonal commandments of anarchic revolt. As Strauss is a living issue, the only one, — Dvořák, Saint-Saëns, Grieg, Goldmark, and the neo-Russians are only rewriting musical history, — it is best that his theme is separately considered. But I have written so much of Strauss that it is beginning to be a fascination, as is the parrot in Flaubert's Un Cœur Simple — and this is not well. Sufficient to add that as in politics he is a Social Democrat, so in his vast and memorial art he is the anarch of anarchs. Not as big a fellow in theme-making as Beethoven, he far transcends Beethoven in harmonic originality. His very scheme of harmonization is the sign of a soul insurgent.

In The Anarchists, with its just motto, "A hundred fanatics are found to support a theological or metaphysical statement, but not one for a geometric theorem," it cannot be denied that Lombroso has worked in futile veins. His conclusions are rash; indeed, his whole philosophy of Degeneration and Madness has a literary color rather than a sound scientific basis. But he has contrived to throw up many fertile ideas; and secretly the reading world likes to believe that its writers, artists, composers, are more or less crazy. Hence the neat little formula of artistic Mattoids, gifted men whose brains are tinged with insanity. Hazlitt, in one of his clear, strongly fibred essays, disposed of the very idea a century back, and with words of stinging scorn. Yet it is fanaticism that has given the world its artistic beauty, given it those dreams that overflow into our life, as Arthur Symons so finely said of Gérard de Nerval. And the most incomplete and unconvincing chapter of the Lombroso book is that devoted to sane men of genius. At the risk of inconsistency I feel like asserting that there are no sane men of genius.

# VI

# THE BEETHOVEN OF FRENCH PROSE

## I

### FLAUBERT AND HIS ART

THE maker of a great style, a lyric poet, who selected as an instrument the "other harmony of prose," a master of characterization and the creator of imperishable volumes, Gustave Flaubert is indeed the Beethoven of French prose. Never was the life of a genius so barren of content, never had there been seemingly such a waste of force. In forty years only four completed books, three tales, and an unfinished volume; a sort of satyricon and lexicon of stupidity — what else is Bouvard et Pécuchet? The outlay of power was just short of the phenomenal, and this Colossus of Croisset, — one falls into superlatives when dealing with him, — this man tormented by an ideal of style, a man who formed a whole generation of writers, is only coming into his kingdom. In his correspondence he is the most facile, the most personal, the least impassable of artists; in his work the

most concentrated, objective, and reticent. There never has been in French prose such a densely spun style, — the web fairly glistening with the idea. Yet of opacity there is none. Like one of those marvellous tapestries woven in the hidden East, the clear woof of Flaubert's motive is never obscured or tangled. George Moore declares L'Education Sentimentale to be as great a work as Tristan und Isolde. It is the polyphony, the magical crossings, recrossings, the interweaving of the subject and the long, elliptical thematic loops made with such consummate ease that command admiration. Flaubert was above all a musician, a musical poet. The ear was his final court of appeal, and to make sonorous cadences in a language that lacks essential richness — it is without the great diapasonic undertow of the Anglo-Saxon — was just short of the miraculous. Until Châteaubriand's and Victor Hugo's time the French tongue was rather a formal pattern than a plastic, liquid collocation of sounds. They blazed the path for Flaubert, and he, with almost Spartan restraint and logical mind, made the language richer, more flexible, more musical, polished, and precise. The word and the idea were indissolubly associated, a perfect welding of matter and manner. Omnipresent with him was the musician's idea of composing a masterpiece that would float by sheer style, a masterpiece unhampered by an idea. The lyric ecstasy of his

written speech quite overmastered him. He was a poet as were De Quincey, Pater, and Poe. The modulation of his style to his themes caused him inconceivable agony. A man of equal gifts, and less exacting conscience, would have calmly written at length, letting style go free in his pursuit of theme; but Flaubert strove ceaselessly to overcome the antinomianism of his material. He wrote La Tentation de Saint Antoine, and its pages sing with golden throats; transpose this style to the lower key of L'Education Sentimentale, and we find the artist maddened by the incongruity of surface and subject. In Madame Bovary, with its symphonic descriptions, Flaubert's style was happily mated; while in the three short tales he is almost flawless. Then came Bouvard et Pécuchet, and here his most ardent lover recognizes the superb stylistic curve. The book is a mound of pitiless irony, yet a mound, not a living organism. Despite its epical breadth, there is something inhuman, too, in the Homeric harmonies of Salammbô.

With the young wind of the twentieth century blowing in our faces it is hardly necessary to pose Flaubert academically. His greatness consists in his not being speared by any literary camp. The romanticists claimed him; they were right. The realists declared that he was their leader, and the extreme naturalists cried up to him, "O Master!" They too were wise. Something

of the idealist, of the realist, is in Flaubert; he is never the doctrinaire. Temperamentally he was a poet; masked epilepsy made him a pessimist. In a less cramped milieu he might have accomplished more, but he would have lost as a writer. It was his fanatical worship of form that ranks him as the greatest artist in fiction the world has ever read. Without Balzac's invention, without Turgénieff's tenderness, without Tolstoy's broad humanity, he nevertheless outstrips them all as an artist. It is his music that will live when his themes are rusty with the years; it is his glorious vision of the possibilities of formal beauty that has made his work classic. You may detect the heart-beat in Flaubert if your ear is finely attuned to his harmonies. A despiser of the facile triumph, of the appeal sentimental, he reminds me more of Landor than De Quincey,—a Landor informed by a passion for fiction. There are pages of Flaubert that one lingers over for the melody, for the evocation of dim landscapes, for the burning hush of noon. In the presence of passion he showed his ancestry; he became the surgeon, not the sympathetic nurse, as was the case with many of his contemporaries. He studied the amorous malady with great cold eyes, for his passions were all intellectual. He had no patience with conventional sentimentality. And how clearly he saw through the hypocrisy of patriotism, the false mouthing of politicians! A small literature has

been modelled after his portrait of the discontented demagogues in L'Education Sentimentale. The grim humor of that famous meeting at the Club of Intellect set Turgénieff off into huge peals of laughter. It is incredibly lifelike. A student of detail, Flaubert gave the imaginative lift to all he wrote: his was a winged realism, and in Madame Bovary we are continually confronted with evidences of his idealistic power. Content to create a small gallery of portraits, he wreaked himself in giving them adequate expression, in investing them with vitality, characteristic coloring, with everything but charm. Flaubert has not the sympathetic charm of his brother-at-arms, Iván Turgénieff. In private life a man of extraordinary magnetism, his bonze-like suppression of personal traits in his books tells us of martyrdom to a lofty theory of style. He sacrificed his life to art, and an unheeding, ungrateful generation first persecuted and then passed him by. It is the very tragedy of literature that a man of robust individuality, handsome, flattered, and wealthy, should retire for life to a room overlooking the Seine, near Rouen, and there wrestle with the seven devils of rhetoric. He subdued them — made them bond-slaves; but he wore himself out in the struggle. He sought to extort from his instrument music that was not in it. What he might have done with the organ-toned English language after so triumphantly mastering the *technique* of the French keyboard

— a genuine piano keyboard — we may only hazard. His name is one of the glories of French literature, and in these times of scamped workmanship, when the cap and bells of cheap historical romance and the evil-smelling weed of the dialect novel are ruling fiction, the figure of the great Frenchman is at once a refuge and an evocation.

Many years have passed since Gustave Flaubert published his third novel, L'Education Sentimentale; and whether it was the unhappy title or the political condition of France at the time, — Turgénieff declared that it was the former, — the big book of five hundred pages failed to attract much attention. There was no public prosecution, as with Madame Bovary, nor did the subject-matter invite the controversy of archæologists; so to the chagrin of the great pupil of Châteaubriand and Balzac this masterpiece of "pitiless observation" hardly aroused a protest. To be sure, M. René Taillandier saw in its pages a covert attack on the idea of young manhood, but then M. Taillandier was given to the discovery of literary mare's nests, and the Franco-Prussian war intervening, one of the greatest of descriptive novels was allowed to repose in dusty peace.

As George Moore, in one of the most luminous of his criticisms, so truthfully says, "Since then it has been read by novelists in search of mate-

rial, and they held their tongues, partly because it was easier to steal than to appreciate, partly because they did not wish to draw attention to their thefts." Yet L'Education Sentimentale was not altogether missed by the critics. Paul Bourget won his way to critical fame with his exhaustive study of its creator; Henri Taine wrote sympathetically of him; Henry James, who will yield to no one in his admiration of the dead master, frankly confesses that the novel is dead, is as sawdust and ashes, while George Saintsbury cannot sufficiently praise it. It is for him "a whole *Comédie Humaine* of failure in two volumes," and Flaubert "can do with a couple of epithets what Balzac takes a page of laborious analysis to do less perfectly." It remained for Mr. Moore to cry the work to heaven and to point out that while Balzac might have written Madame Bovary, no one but Flaubert could have produced L'Education Sentimentale.

Mr. Moore is right; the novel is stupendous, is appalling in its magnitude and handling of the unpromising material of life, in its piercing analysis, power of concrete characterization, and overwhelming mastery of style. "The ignoble pleases me," Flaubert said once; "it is the sublime of the lower slopes." L'Education Sentimentale is the very lowest slope of the ignobly sublime.

"The great artists are those who impose on

humanity their particular illusions," cries Guy de Maupassant, after serving seven long years of apprenticeship to Flaubert and literature, with what results we all know. Flaubert's particular illusion was so completely magnificent that but few of his intimates absolutely realized it. Life, he confessed, was to him a bad odor; "it was like an odor of unpleasant cooking escaping by a vent-hole." Yet despite his love of the exotic, of the barbarous, of the Orient, he forced himself to see it, handle it, estimate it, and write of it. When he wished to roam in the East or in old Carthaginian times, he took up the history of the daughter of Farmer Roualt, and we got Emma Bovary. When Egypt and the Thebaid tempted him with its ascetic gloom and dream splendors, he resolutely tied himself to his monkish desk at Croisset and worked for six years at L'Education Sentimentale.

Picture to yourself this green-eyed Norman giant, stalking up and down his terrace spouting aloud Châteaubriand, whose sonorous, cadenced lines were implacably engraved on his memory. Flaubert's favorite passage was this from Atala: "Elle répand dans le bois ce grand secret de mélancholie qu'elle aime à raconter aux vieux chênes et aux rivages antiques des mers." One recalls Matthew Arnold's love for Maurice de Guerin's Centaur, and his eternal quotation of that marmoreal phrase, "But upon the shores of

what ocean have they rolled the stone that hides them, O Macareus?" Little wonder that the passengers on the steamboat bound for Rouen enjoyed the spectacle of the inspired martyr to style as he paced his garden in an old dressing-gown, chanting the swelling phrases of Châteaubriand!

Relentlessly pursued by the demon of perfection, a victim to epilepsy, a despiser of the second-hand art of his day, is it not strange that Flaubert ever wrote a line? Execution was for him a painful parturition; he was delivered of his phrases in agony, and yet his first book, born after ten years of herculean effort, was a masterpiece. Did not a great critic say, "Madame Bovary is one of the glories of French literature?" But it almost sent its author to jail. Without the toleration, the adaptability of his dear comrade, Turgénieff, Flaubert took life symphonically. It was a sad, serious thing, and to escape its rigors he surrounded himself in the magic cloud of an ironic art, — an art addressed to the elect. He felt the immedicable pity of existence, yet never resorted to the cheap religious nostrums and political prophylactics of his contemporaries. He despised the bourgeois; this lifelong rancor was at once his deliverance and his downfall; it gave us L'Education Sentimentale, but it also produced Bouvard et Pécuchet. Judged by toilsome standards of criticism, Flaubert was a failure, but a failure monstrous,

outrageous, and almost cosmical; there is something elemental in this failure. As satirical as Swift, he was devoured by a lyrism as passionate as Victor Hugo's. This colossus of ennui set out to conquer material life, to crush it with superb, indifferent hands and was himself vanquished by it; and in the smoke and dust of defeat his noble figure went down as if some strange meteor had shot from the dark blue to the very bowels of the globe. After forty years of toil in his hermitage, he left only six volumes, nearly all masterpieces, but not masterpieces for the million.

Flaubert, as Saintsbury justly points out, occupied "a very singular middle position between romanticism and naturalism, between the theory of literary art, which places the idealizing of merely observed facts first of all, and is sometimes not too careful about the theory which places the observation first if not also last, and is sometimes ostentatiously careless of any idealizing whatsoever." His was a realism of a vastly superior sort to that of his disciples. The profound philosophic bias of his mind enabled him to pierce behind appearances, and while his surfaces are extraordinary in finish, exactitude, and detail, the aura of things and persons is never wanting. His visualizing power has never been excelled, not even by Balzac, — a stroke or two and a man or woman peers out from behind the types. He ambushed

himself in the impersonal, and thus his criticism of life seems hard, cold, and cruel to those readers who look for the occasional amiable fillip of Gautier, Fielding, Thackeray, and Dickens. This frigid withdrawal of self behind the screen of his art gave him all the more freedom to set moving his puppets; it is this quality that caused him to be the only naturalist to receive mercy from Brunetière's remorseless pen. Those who mortise the cracks in their imagination with current romanticism, Flaubert will never captivate. He seems too remote; he regards his characters too dispassionately. This objectivity is carried to dangerous lengths in Sentimental Education, for the book is minor in tone, without much exciting incident — exciting in the Dumas or Stevenson sense — and is inordinately long. Five hundred pages seem too much by half to be devoted to a young man who does not know his own mind. Yet Frédéric Moreau is a man you are sure to meet on your way home. He is born in great numbers and in every land, and his middle name is Mediocrity. Only the golden mean of his gifts has not brought him happiness. He has some money, and was born of middle-class parents in the provinces. His mother's hope, he is sent to Paris to the schools, and has just taken his bachelor degree when the book begins. On the steamboat bound for Nogent-sur-Seine, Frédéric meets Arnoux, the art dealer, — an admirably drawn personality, — and falls in

love with Madame Arnoux. That love — the leading motive of the work — proves his ruin, and it is his one pure love; a sample of Flaubert's irony, who refuses to be satisfied with the conventional minor moralities and our conventional disposition of events. Frédéric goes home, but cannot forget Madame Arnoux. He is romantic, rather silly, good-hearted, and hopelessly weak. Like the sound of a firm, clanging chord his character is indicated at the outset and there is little later development. As the flow of some sluggish river through flat lands, oozing banks, and neat embankments, Frédéric's life canalizes in leisurely fashion. He loses his fortune, he inherits another, he goes back to Paris, he lives in Bohemia — such a real Bohemia — and he frequents the salons of the wealthy. He encounters fraud, meanness, hypocrisy, rapacity, on every side, and like Rastignac is a bit of a snob. He is fond of women, but a constitutional timidity prevents him from reaping any sort of success with them, for he is always afraid of some one "coming in." When he does assert himself, he fears the sound of his own voice, yet in the duel with Cisy — one of the most superbly satirical set pieces in any literature — he is seemingly brave. His relations with La Maréchale are wonderfully set forth; he is her dupe, yet a dupe with eyes wide open and without the power of retaliation. Infirmity of will allied to a charming person,

this young man is a memorable portrait. He is not the hero, for the book is without one, just as it is plotless and apparently motiveless. Elimination is practised unceasingly, yet the broadest effects are secured; the apparent looseness of construction vanishes on a second reading. Almost fugal in treatment is the development of episodes, and while the rhythms are elliptical, large, irregular — rhythm there always is — the unrelated, unfinished, unrounded, decomposed semblance to life is all the while cunningly preserved. What Mr. James would call the "figure in the carpet," the decorative, the thematic pattern, is never lost, the assonant web being exquisitely spun. The whole book floats in the air; it is a miracle work. It is full of the clangor and buzz of Time's loom.

For me Rosalie Arnoux is the unique attraction. Henry James calls her a failure — spiritually. She is one of the most charming portraits in French fiction, and yet a perfectly virtuous woman. The aroma of her character pervades the pages of this wonderful "encyclopædia of life." What shall I tell you of the magical descriptions of the ball at the Alhambra and other masked balls at La Maréchale's; of the duel; of the street fighting during the revolution of '48; of the cynical journalist, Hussonet, a type for all times; of the greedy Des Lauriers; of peevish Senecal; of good-hearted Dussardier; of Pellerin, who reads all the works on æsthetics ex-

tant so as to paint beautifully; of Mlle. Vatnaz, skinny, slender, amorous, and enigmatic? What shall I say of M. Roque, of Louise, of the actor Delmar, who turns his profile to his audiences; of Madame Dambreuse and her sleek infidelities; of her avaricious husband; of Frédéric's foolish mother, so like himself; of Regimbart, formidable, thirsty Regimbart, with his oaths, his daily café-route, and his magnificent air of bravado? The list is not large, but every figure is painted by a master. And the vanity, the futility, the barrenness of it all! It is the philosophy of disenchantment, and about the book hangs the inevitable atmosphere of defeat, of mortification, of unheroic resignation. It is life, commonplace, quotidian life, and truth is stamped on its portals. All is vanity and vexation of spirit. The tragedy of the petty has never before been so mockingly, so menacingly, so absolutely displayed. An unhappy book, you say! Yes; and proves nothing except that life is but a rope of sand. Read it if you care for art in its most quintessentialized form, but if you are better pleased with the bravery and show of things external, avoid this novel, I beseech you, for it is as bitter in the mouth as a page torn from Ecclesiastes.

"And thus it is that Flaubert . . . became a sort of monk of literature, shut away from the world, solitary and morose, beholding humanity with horror, with repulsion, with irony, with sarcasm, with an evil laugh sadder than tears, and

casting upon mankind what are called glances of pity — in other words, pitiless glances, . . . just as a friar passes a life of contemplation and meditation, saying to himself that God is great and that men are small, so he spent almost the whole of a fairly long life saying to himself again and again that men are small and that art is great, scorning the one and serving the other with an equal fervor and an equal ardor of uncompromising devotion."

Emile Faguet in his excellent monograph on Flaubert — in Les Grands Ecrivains Français — thus summed up his life. Paul Bourget called his works "a manual of nihilism," and declared that in each sentence of Flaubert's "inheres a hidden force." More significant still is Bourget's anecdote illustrating Flaubert's almost insane devotion to style.

"He was very proud," relates Bourget, "of furnishing his story of Herodias with the adverb *alternativement*, — alternately. This word whose two accents on *ter* and *ti* give it a loose swing, seemed to him to render concrete and almost perceptible the march of the two slaves who in turn carried the head of St. John the Baptist." And in the preface by Flaubert to Dernières Chansons de Louis Bouilhet may be found his startling yet rational theory that good prose alone can stand the test of being read aloud, for "a well-constructed phrase adapts itself to the rhythm of respiration."

"While remaining itself obscure," writes George Moore of L'Education Sentimentale, "this novel has given birth to a numerous literature. The Rougon-Macquart series is nothing but L'Education Sentimentale rewritten into twenty volumes by a prodigious journalist — twenty huge balloons which bob about the streets, sometimes getting clear of the housetops. Maupassant cut it into numberless walking sticks; Goncourt took the descriptive passages and turned them into Passy rhapsodies. The book has been a treasure cavern known to forty thieves, whence all have found riches and fame. The original spirit has proved too strong for general consumption, but, watered and prepared, it has had the largest sale ever known."

Some one in Henry Labouchere's London Truth wrote this of the author of Boule de Suif: "Guy de Maupassant's death has revived an interest in his works. He was admittedly the son of Flaubert, from whom he inherited his sanguine temperament, ruddy complexion, the full starting veins in his temples, the bull neck, and the flaw in his nervous system. Flaubert was subject to epileptic fits, and Guy de Maupassant died of general paralysis, preceded by madness, before he had reached middle age. As a writer he was with ease what Flaubert tried to be by great efforts, and something more, he having a deeper insight into what seem the ordinary circumstances of life."

The Beethoven of French prose was, every one knows, whimsical and fastidious to a degree with his style. Be it true or not, one of his friends relates that he found him one day standing in front of a high music desk, on which stood a paragraph written in large letters. "What are you doing there?" said his friend. "Scanning these words because they don't sound well." Flaubert would spend a day over a sentence because it did not sound well, and every sentence he sent to press was equally closely analyzed. Well, why not! If modern prose were written for the ear as well as the eye, chanted and scanned, it would be more sonorous, more rhythmic, in a word, more artistic. I believe the story, although it does not appear in Tarvers's book on Flaubert. It is glorious, true or false; it fixes an ideal for young writers.

## II

## THE TWO SALAMMBÔS

After doggedly working like a galley slave for six years Gustave Flaubert published Salammbô in Paris near the close of 1862. He was then forty-one years old, in the prime of his laborious and picturesque life, recluse, man of the world, traveller, and one of the most devoted of sons. In 1849, with Maxime du Camp —who later imprudently lifted the curtain on

the sad secret of his friend's life — Flaubert made a journey up the Nile, through Egypt, Nubia, by the Red Sea, through Palestine and Syria, into Cyprus, Rhodes, Asia Minor, Turkey in Europe, and Greece. Before Dr. Schliemann, the great Flaubert dug in Mycenæ, and from the "trenches of Herculaneum, on to the rocks of Cape Misenum," he explored, furiously obsessed by a fantastic idea. In 1850 we find him in Phœnicia, a wanderer and an excavator of buried pasts. During 1858 he went to Tunis, and to the ruins of Carthage. From these delvings was born the epical romance of Salammbô, a book full of sonorous lines like the sweeping harmonies of Wagner, a book of mad dreams, blood, lust, cruelty, and love faithful unto death.

Following the publication of this story Flaubert, a lion in literary Paris since his artistic and legal victories with Madame Bovary, found himself the centre of many attacks by historians, archæologists, pedants, and the critical small fry of the town. To one adversary the blond giant of Croisset deigned a reply. It was M. Froehner, then editor of the *Revue Contemporaine*, and an expert in archæology — that is, an expert until Flaubert answered his arguments and literally blew them off the globe. He admitted having created Salammbô; that the aqueduct which Mathô and Spendius traversed the night Salammbô first saw the Zäimph was also an invention; that Hanno was really crucified in Sardinia;

and a few other minor changes. Then to Froehner's animadversions he gave text for text, authority for authority, and when a question of topography arose, Flaubert clinched his answer with: "Is it to shine by trying to make the dunces believe that I do not distinguish between Cappadocia and Asia Minor? But I know it, sir; I have seen it, I have taken walks in it."

If the question was consecrating apes to the moon, or whether beards covered in bags in sign of mourning are in Cahen [Ezekiel xxiv. 17] and on the chins of Egyptian colossi — any doubtful fact, be it ethnic, archæologic, ethic, æsthetic, or historic, was met by a volley of answers, a flood of learning, a wealth of reading, that simply overwhelmed his antagonist. The affair was tremendously diverting for the lookers-on, but it is to be doubted if art was benefited. For two dusty German professors such a controversy might have proved useful; in it Flaubert simply wasted his glorious powers.

Salammbô, despite its erudition, is a love story, original in design, set in a strange environment, a love story withal. The accusations of a too impersonal style and of a lack of human interest do not altogether hold when the wonderfully vital portrait of Salammbô is studied; and the fiery Mathô, the leper Hanno, Hamilcar, stern, but loving his little son Hannibal like the apple of his eye; the wily Spendius, the fanatical high priest — here is a group of living humans, animated by

the same passions as ours, a delineation almost cruel in its clearness, and all surrounded by an atmosphere of realistic beauty that bespeaks the art of its creator. The style, the superb cadenced prose which passes us in processional splendor or else penetrates the soul like a strange perfume, this style so sharp in outline, so canorous to the ear, a style at once pictorial and musical, — to this unique verbal presentation I cannot accord justice. Flaubert is first the musician and then the psychologist.

Ernest Reyer was born in 1823. His family name was Rey, and he hails from Marseilles. A very old but active man, Reyer is librarian of the Opéra, and is, or was, critic of the *Journal des Débats*, a position formerly held by Berlioz. In 1876 he succeeded Félicien David as a member of the Institute. These two composers exerted the major influence upon the work of Reyer. He imitated David in his choice of Eastern subjects and Berlioz in his modern instrumentation. Beginning as a reformer, writing music that was classed as too advanced, Reyer lived to hear himself called a reactionary — and with justice, for in his setting to Salammbô he harks back to Meyerbeer, Halévy, and Félicien David. The mighty wave of Wagner had no attraction for this Frenchman until he heard the Tristan Prelude in 1884. From that time he became an ardent preacher

of the faith Wagnerian. He modelled his orchestration after Wagner, wrote of his music in his critical journal, and became known as one of the men in Paris who could be counted upon for the Bayreuth propaganda.

Yet in practice Reyer seems timid. Not possessing much musical individuality, he attempted what most unoriginal men attempt, he temporized, became a composer of compromises and an eclectic. So in his music, even in his best work, Sigurd, the want of a strong, individual style is noticeable. As early as 1876 selections from Sigurd had been given in concert by Pasdeloup. The theme of the opera is almost identical with Wagner's Götterdämmerung, the book of which was finished in 1853. Is it any wonder that Reyer speaks of his early music as coming too late after David and his later music too soon after Wagner? Berlioz produced his Erostrate at Baden-Baden, and Bizet said that La Statue was one of the most remarkable operas given in France for two decades. With all his half successes — for Sigurd is in the repertory of the Paris Opéra — Reyer cannot be considered as a strong man in any way. He has imitated Gluck and Wagner, Berlioz and Wagner. Years ago, after hearing Sigurd, I called him "le petit Berlioz," but I now consider the phrase a pleasing exaggeration. Berlioz was a master of orchestration. Reyer is not. And he has nothing new to say. We all recognize

those impotent phrases, hollow and sonorous as the wind in a tall chimney, that are plastered over his scores. Those cries "O Ciel!" "Je t'aime!" and "Horreur!" are they not idiotic in librettos and music! Here is the musical phrase *cliché* in all its banal perfection, and the thunderous choruses *à la* Meyerbeer which punctuate Reyer's scenes weary the nerves, beat down our sympathies, and stun our ears.

Sigurd is the one opera that betrays fancy, science, and a feeling for characterization. I have enjoyed parts of it at the Paris Opéra, but wondered why the composer had selected the subject. Brunhild lies asleep on the fiery mountain, situated in Iceland. Sigurd, Gunther, and Hagen swear friendship, and Sigurd puts on the tarn-cap, winning Hilda, as she is called, for Gunther. There is the episode of the naked sword, and later Sigurd is slain by Gunther. The ballet is very pretty, and Wagner's influence is in evidence. Sigurd, though produced in 1884, was really composed before Götterdämmerung. Again Reyer came too late.

In 1889 he finished the score of Salammbô. It was first sung at the Théâtre de la Monnaie, Brussels, February 10, 1890, with Rose Caron, Sellier, Bouvet, Vergnet, and Renaud in the cast. Two years later, May 23, 1892, Paris listened to the opera with Rose Caron, Albert Saléza, Vaquet, Delmas, and Renaud in the production. Wednesday night, March 20, 1901,

in the Metropolitan Opera House, New York viewed its spectacle, for spectacle Salammbô is, spectacle and naught else. The cast is given as a matter of record: Lucienne Bréval, Salammbô; Saléza, Mathô; Salignac, High Priest; Journet, Narr' Havas; Gilibert, Giscon; Scotti, Hamilcar; Sizes, Spendius; Dufriche, Autharite, and Carrie Bridewell, Taanach. Luigi Mancinelli conducted. The production was an elaborate and costly one.

Camille du Locle, who butchered Flaubert's book to make a holiday for the Parisians, accomplished his task successfully according to his lights — theatrical lights. He altered the story, suppressed much of its humanity, and eliminated the magnificent picturesqueness of the romance. Du Locle divides his scene plots thus: —

Act I. The Gardens of Hamilcar's Palace.

Act II. The Temple of Tanit.

Act III. First Scene. The Temple of Moloch. Second Scene. The Terrace of Salammbô.

Act IV. First Scene. The Camp of the Mercenaries. Second Scene. The Tent of Mathô. Third Scene. The Field of Battle.

Act V. The Forum.

I need hardly tell you the original story — how Mathô, the fierce Libyan warrior, first saw the lovely daughter of Hamilcar; how he resolved to win her; the rape of the sacred veil of Tanit, called the Zäimph, and Salammbô's terror

at seeing it shroud the person of a Barbarian in her sleeping chamber; the pursuit, the escape, the return of Hamilcar and the resolve of Salammbô to win back for Carthage its holy veil. Who can describe after Flaubert the massed shock of armies, the pillage of cities and the crucifixion of the lions! To the march of his sonorous sentences we move through strange scenes, scenes of repulsive horror, slaughtered men and beasts, and the odor of sun-baked carcasses, over which hover obscene winged creatures seeking carrion.

Salammbô, after a hieratic ceremonial with the huge sacred serpent of the temple — Rodin alone might execute this episode in shivering marble — visits the tent of Mathô, recovers the Zäimph, but meets with an accident. She discovers her love for the Mercenary chief, who justly besieges Carthage for the pay of his soldiers, and she snaps the gold anklet-chain that daughters of patricians wore in those times. Mathô is captured, tortured by having to run the gantlet of Carthage's enraged populace, and finally drops before the terraced throne upon which sits Salammbô beside her affianced husband, Narr' Havas, the Numidian. The poor hunted wretch, over whose red flesh the skin hangs in bloody strips, dies, and his heart is cut out before the eyes of Salammbô. She takes poison from a goblet handed her by the expectant bridegroom. All who touch the veil of

Tanit must perish. So is it decreed by the law and the prophets!

M. du Locle has altered this significant ending by making Salammbô stab herself, and then Mathô — by the usual "frenzied and superhuman effort" — breaks his bonds and carves himself into eternity. It is sweetly gory and melodramatic, this ending. Of course, the trip through the aqueduct is omitted and the theft of the Zäimph takes place before Salammbô's eyes. This is in the second act. The librettist, with memories of Faust, causes Mathô to make an imaginary circle through which it would be impious to penetrate. Incidentally he wooes the young lady with true Gallic ardor. Yet this act, far removed as it is from the book, is the best of the five.

What follows is of no consequence; the council chamber is lugged in for its picture, and the spectacle of Salammbô dressing on a terrace under the rays of a Carthaginian moon, as round as a silver buckler, does not advance the action materially. The camp and battle scenes do credit to the taste of the decorator, though they are meaningless. But in Mathô's tent, where Salammbô presently arrives, Reyer strikes fire for the first time. His hero and heroine have thus far been smothered by processions of chanting priests, by mobs of soldiery, by ballets and by monster choruses. Here the man and the woman, face to face, bare their souls, and the

music, not so passionate or so desperate as Valentine and Raoul's duo in the fourth act of Les Huguenots, is yet sincere and touching. After that the opera oozes away in mere pantomime. There is a fall down a series of lofty staircases, which is not high art.

I could only distinguish two well-defined leading-motives in the *partition.* One came from Gounod's Romeo and Juliet, fourth act, the other is a slight deviation from Tristan's cry in Act III: "O Isolde." For the rest, I have a vague remembrance of *cantilena* without melody, finales without climax, a thin, noisy, shallow, and irritating stream of orchestration and a vocal score that either screamed or roared. The harmonic scheme is dull and there is little rhythmic variety. Reyer, as I said before, has few musical ideas, and he does not conceal this deficiency by the graceful externals of a brilliant instrumentation. As well meant as was Reyer's admiration for the immortal story, a story that will outlive the mock antiquities of Bulwer, Ebers, and Sienkiewicz, the French critic and composer was not the man to give it a musical setting. Wagner or Verdi — none other — could have made of his glowing Oriental prose-poem a music-drama of vital power and exquisite coloring.

It is a holy and wholesome thing to visit the graves of genius, for the memories aroused

may serve as an inspiration and a consolation in the spiritually arid tracts of daily and doleful existence. But as the emotions aroused at the sight of great men's relics are profound only to the individual — they seldom make interesting reading — so more than a record of the fact that I have visited Rouen several times to view the tomb of Gustave Flaubert is not of burning importance. I cannot help protesting, however, at the tardy official recognition accorded one of the greatest prose masters France can boast, and one of the great world novelists. In the Solferino Gardens there is the marble memorial by the sculptor Chapu, and up on the heights of the Monumental Cemetery lie his remains in the Flaubert family plot, not very far from the Joan of Arc monument. The Government has done nothing, though it has erected marble quarries to mediocrities not worthy to unlatch the shoes of Flaubert. Guy de Maupassant is remembered in the Solferino Gardens by a statue *vis-à-vis* to the master whom he loved and to whom he owed so much. At Paris another loving memorial stands in the Parc Monceau; yet for Flaubert, a giant when compared to the unhappy writer of the Contes, there is nothing — not even a commemorative tablet.

The least reparation for this neglect that the French Government can offer is the purchase and preservation of the little house in which Madame Bovary was composed with such pain-

ful travail. It still stands, though fast crumbling into decay, on the bank of the Seine at Croisset about half an hour below Rouen. The paternal house has vanished, and occupying part of the little park is a dismantled manufactory. Abbé Prévost is said to have written Manon Lescaut in the old house — at least, Flaubert believed the story.

The faithful Colange, for twenty years servitor in the Flaubert household, keeps a small café near his former home, and is always ready to talk of the master and of his mother, Madame Flaubert. For two seasons I vainly tried to get from Colange a photograph of this mother. To me the mothers of great men are of extraordinary interest. No money could tempt the old man, though he might have had the picture reproduced and sold the copies.

With his phrase uttered at Flaubert's grave, M. François Coppée fastened more firmly to history the name of that noble artist, "The Beethoven of French Prose."

# VII

## VERDI AND BOÏTO

Drama is relentlessly encroaching upon the domain of music. In Falstaff, the most noteworthy achievement since Die Meistersinger, we get something which for want of a better title one may call lyric comedy. But in form it is novel. It is not opera buffa; nor yet is it opèra comique in the French sense; in fact it shows a marked deviation from its prototypes; even the elaborate system of Wagnerian leading motives is not employed. It is a new Verdi we hear; not the Verdi of Il Trovatore, La Traviata, or Aïda, but a Verdi brimful of the joy of life, sophisticated, yet naïve. A marvellous compound is this musical comedy, in which the music follows the text, and no concessions are made to the singers or to the time-honored conventions of the operatic stage. Verdi has thrown overboard old forms and planted his victorious standard in the country discovered by Mozart and conquered by Wagner. A marvellous old man indeed!

The play's the thing to catch the conscience of the composer to-day. The action in Falstaff

is almost as rapid as if the text were spoken; and the orchestra, the wittiest and most sparkling *riant* orchestra I ever heard, — comments upon the monologue and dialogue of the book. When the speech becomes rhetorical, so does the orchestra. It is heightened speech, and instead of melody of the antique, formal pattern we hear the endless melody which Wagner employs. But Verdi's speech is his own and does not savor of Wagner. If the ideas are not developed or do not assume vaster proportions, it is because of their character. They could not be so treated without doing violence to the sense of proportion. Classic purity in expression, Latin exuberance, joyfulness, and an inexpressibly delightful atmosphere of irresponsible youthfulness and gayety are all in this charming score.

We get a touch of the older style in the concerted numbers, but the handling is very free and the content Verdian and modern. Here are variety, color, freshness, earnestness, insouciance, and numberless quaint conceits. The tempo is like an arrow-shot from the bow of a classic-featured archer, whose arrows have been steeped in the burning lake of romanticism. There is melodic repetition of phrases, but it is more in the manner of Grétry than Wagner. I have called Falstaff a pendant to Die Meistersinger, and the two works, directly antithetical, are both supreme products of the

Gallic and Teutonic lyric genius. And how Verdi escaped the current of his younger years! What wonderful adaptability, what receptivity, what powers of assimilation! Some future biographer will write of The Three Styles of Verdi as did de Lenz of Beethoven's styles; perhaps he will even increase the number.

Wagner did not shed his musical skin as absolutely as this Italian. Compare the young and the old Verdi. In style to-day Falstaff is younger than Il Trovatore half a century ago. Think of La donna è mobile and then of the fugued finale to Falstaff. And remember, it is not a fugato with imitative passages, nor the fugal treatment of an ensemble finale, but a well-constructed fugue in eight real parts, with episodes, inversions of the subject, stretti, and even a pedal point. It is not so pleasing in effect as the magnificent polyphonic close of Die Meistersinger, because of its severely formal construction. It sounds as if Verdi had said, "Go to; after all this mumming and masking I will show ye that I, too, can be serious." So he fugues the words "Tutto nel mondo è burlo," of all words in the world for such a form! What a gay old dog he must have been! And heaven knows what jokes he had in store for us, hidden in the capacious sleeves of his genius. I am sorry that an important engagement in the Lethean fields prevented von Bülow from being present at this Falstaff performance. He had

to recant his opinion of the Manzoni Requiem; but after this fugue he would have surely bent the stubborn knee of pride and prostrated himself before the Italian god of music.

No one can reproach Verdi with lack of ideas in Falstaff. They are never ending. The orchestra flows furiously, like a stream of quicksilver, tossing up repartee, argument, facts, amplifying, developing, and strengthening the text. No melody? Why, the opera is one long, merry tune — jocund, blithe, sweet, dulcet, and sunny. Few moods of melancholy, no moods of madness, but all gracious folly and fantasy.

The Honor soliloquy from Henry IV, with its pizzicati accompaniment and its No! punctuated by a drum tap, is changed into strength and sarcastic humor. When I Was a Page is another gem, and so is the chattering quartet. But why enumerate details? It is a work of which one cannot say "this and this," it is so rich, so exuberant, so novel, and yet so learned; little wonder then that we marvel. Verdi's musical scholarship is enormous. He paints delicate, fairylike pictures, using the most delicate pigments and with the daintiest touch imaginable; and then he pens a severe and truthful canon in the second which excites the admiration of the scholar. The minuet is an echo of old time, but how superlatives pale before the wealth of rhythms, modes, subtle tonalities, simple diatonic effects contrasted with gor-

geous, sonorous orchestral bursts! And it must not be forgotten that both composer and librettist have caught the true Shakespearean note. The corpulent knight, despite his braggadocio humor, lechery, and gluttony, is a gentleman born, although sadly run to seed because of sack and petticoats. The glamour of the revel at Herne's Oak, the street scene at dusk, with the gossiping of the women, and the clear, fresh air, — and there is no attempt at Purcell madrigals, English local color, — all these prove Verdi's sympathy; also that music is a universal language and that an Italian poet-composer may faithfully frame the story of an English dramatist.

And with what a light hand and vivacity of speech Verdi has done it! Miracles of construction there are, but the grim bones of theory are never exposed. Even the fugue is jaunty. The love element peeps archly out behind the puffed mask of humor; the note is never deep, just a sigh, and it has departed before you can fairly grasp its beauty. The duos are all charming, and — but what boots idle cataloguing? Its beauties should have become patent to our opera-going public and the work a favorite long ago. "Après moi, le deluge," said the Wagnerites of the great Richard. "After Wagner, Verdi!" some may explain. Falstaff suggests, of course, Victor Maurel, and our debt of gratitude for his vital and sympathetic interpretations is great.

Is there an actor on any stage to-day who can portray both the grossness of Falstaff and the subtlety of Iago? I doubt it. Making all due allowances for the different art medium the singing actor must work in, despite the slight exaggeration of pose and gesture, Maurel had no superior, if indeed an equal, in these two rôles. And then the man's astonishing versatility! What method, what manner of training has he had? Of what school or schools is he the crystallized product? His voice, worn and siccant, seemed to take on any hue he desired. In Falstaff, you may remember, it was bullying, blandishing, defiant, tender, and gross; full of impure suggestiveness, as jolly as a boon companion. And when he sang "Quando ero paggio del Duca di Norfolk," how his vocal horizon lighted up!

The brainlessness of Verdi's music previous to the time when Aïda was composed should not close our eyes to the promise and potency of that same early music. It is the music of a passionate Italian temperament — music hastily conceived, still more speedily jotted down, and tumbled anyhow on the stage. Musical Italy before 1880 was devoted to the voice. Give it a plank, a dramatic situation, an aria, and success pursued the composer. As for the dramatic unities, the orchestral commentary, the welding of action, story, and music — why, they could all go hang. Melody, irrelevant, fatuous,

trivial melody, and again melody, was the shibboleth. The wonder is that an orchestra was ever employed — except that it made more noise than a piano player; that costumes were ever worn — only because they looked braver, gayer, in the flare of the footlights than street attire. And most wonderful of all was the expense of a theatre, for to those melomaniacs anything but a tune was a deterrent factor. The singer and the song sung composed an opera. All the rest was sheer waste of material — or Teutonic madness.

Verdi's acquaintance with Arrigo Boïto was the turning-point in his career. He knew Boïto's far better than he knew Wagner's scores. If he was affected at all by Wagnerism, it was by way of Boïto and not at first hand. I am not prepared to deny that Verdi ever listened to the Ring, to Tristan, or to Die Meistersinger in its entirety sung by competent throats; yet I sincerely doubt it. The Italian's early music is full of Rossini, Donizetti, Bellini, and Meyerbeer. He could not, being of a receptive nature, have escaped Wagner had he known him thoroughly. He was a very suspicious, proud old man, — as proud of I Due Foscari as of Aïda, — and almost to the day of his death deprecated Wagner's influence on modern opera. To see, then, as do many wise men of music, Wagner peering sardonically from behind the lively and exciting bars of Verdi's later scores, is

to claim a clairvoyance to which I dare not pretend.

Take any of Verdi's operas previous to those of 1850, and what do we get? A string of passionate tunes bracketed in the conventional *cavatina-cabaletta* style; little attempt at following the book — such awful books! — and the orchestra, a huge strumming machine, strumming without color, appositeness, rhyme, or reason. And then the febrile, simian-like restlessness of the music. It was written for people of little musical intelligence, people who must hum a tune or ever after view it with contempt. Verdi could furnish tunes by the hundred — real, vital, dramatic ones. Think of the waste, the saddening waste, of material made by the young maestro in Oberto, Nabucco, I Lombardi, Ernani, I Due Foscari, Attila, Macbeth, Luisa Miller, and I Masnadieri! If he could have but saved them for his latter days — for his so-called third period! I know that your early Verdian refuses to consider the later music. He even listens to Aïda under protest. In it lurks the Wagnerian *Wurm* that in Otello and Falstaff stings to death the melodic genius of the venerable master. Now, I quarrel with no man's artistic tastes. It were a futile proceeding. If you love Rigoletto better than Otello, I have no objection to make. I cannot bring any argument to bear upon you, for I am not a special pleader in matters musical. As

well try to convince a man who asserts that Dumas père is a greater novelist than Flaubert. Yet I enjoy certain moments in Rigoletto, just as I think The Three Guardsmen rattling good reading. But to call either the opera or the romance great art is to mix your critical values.

Verdi was not by nature a reformer. A man of sensual gifts in the way of music-making, a born dramatizer of anything from an antique ruin to a murder, he took up the operatic form as he found it and did not seek to develop it. But he poured into its ancient, honorable, and somewhat shaky mould stuff of a stirring nature — and also an amazing amount of it. Think of the twenty-five and more operas he made before he reached Aïda! To be sure, there is a suspicious resemblance between his melodies, his characters, his situations; there is always the blood-curdling story of intrigue, — political, passionate, — with its elopements, loves, cutthroat conspirators, booted chorus, and its orchestral tremolo. We get the dime novel set to music, the inartistic glorification of the melodrama. Verdi needed money, love, fame, easily gained, and being a much more industrious man than Rossini he contrived to turn out in forty years twice as many musical pot-boilers. I have always admired Rossini's musical laziness. Once rich, he refused to compose any more. As his facility was on a par with his lack of artistic conscience, the thought of the amount he might

have left makes one shudder. But luckily he was content to give us — not to mention any of the others — The Barber of Seville, a masterpiece pure and undefiled.

Verdi, also lacking an artistic conscience, and without high artistic ideals, produced operas as indefatigably as incubators chickens. Naturally such music perished early, and his failures more than balance his successes. He made money, an enormous amount; he was probably the richest composer that ever drove a pen. The usual fate has overtaken the early music, while even Rigoletto, Il Trovatore, and La Traviata no longer draw unless sung by an "all star" cast. I pass over the Manzoni Requiem of 1874. It was too near the Aïda epoch to make a great forward step. Otello, in 1887, set the musical world mad with surprise, curiosity, delight. It reveals little or none of the narrow, noisy, vulgar, and violent Verdi of 1850. The character-drawing is done by a man who is master of his material. The plot moves in majestical splendor, and the musical psychology is often subtle. At last Verdi has flowered. His other music, smelling ranker of the soil, showing more thematic invention, was but the effort of a hot-headed man of the footlights, a seeker after applause and money. In Otello all musical provincialisms have vanished; the writing is clear, the passion more controlled, the effects aimed at easily compassed. The master craft of Iago

is set over against the fiery, nerve-shaking passion of Otello, and Shakespeare is suggested, withal a very Italian one.

Falstaff was a second surprise. How an old graybeard of eighty could have conceived such music is only to be explained by the young heart of the man, by his sweetly healthy nature, his Latin frugality in living. He was ever a taciturn man, a stoic, not an epicurean. As an index to his character his music is often misleading. Add to these qualities the beautiful friendship of Arrigo Boïto, from which came a libretto, and the sum total is a setting of Shakespeare's comedy such as the world has never seen. Here again Wagner had less to do with the matter than is supposed. In the musical dialogue Verdi patterned after Die Meistersinger, for the emotion ever follows the text. From Mozart's Marriage of Figaro and Rossini's Barber of Seville he absorbed no little of gay sunshine and effervescence. But his form is his own ; it grew out of the situations of the play, and was not a procrustean bed of theory upon which the composer stretched his characters. It is laughing and joyous, this comedy of an octogenarian. It fairly ripples with the humor of the Fat Knight. There are no leading motives in the Wagnerian sense, though every character is outlined with precision.

Now, I assert that Arrigo Boïto helped all this, stimulated a young-old man to conquer new and more fruitful provinces. And Boïto,

who built two of the best librettos we know, certainly influenced Verdi in his study of instrumentation. Compare Rigoletto and Otello orchestrally! The advance is remarkable, all things being considered. And at Verdi's years! I suspect that Verdi made the sketches, which Boïto transformed into painted pictures; just as I discern, as can any one with ears, the intellectual characteristics in common between Mefistofele and Iago's monologues. Yet Verdi is true Verdi to the last.

Rigoletto, Il Trovatore, and La Traviata have one cardinal merit, in addition to their miracles of mellifluousness—they prefigure the later Verdi, the thinking Verdi, the truer musical dramatist. In regarding these we again encounter critical superciliousness of the most pronounced type. The neo-Verdians will have none of the middle-century Verdi—forgetting that no man may lift himself to the stars by his own bootstraps. Verdi offers a fine picture of crawling, creeping evolution. I confess that I believe the man would have stuck at Don Carlos, Sicilian Vespers, Araldo, Un Ballo in Maschera, La Forza del Destino, Simon Boccanegra, and the rest of the reactionary stuff, had it not been for the masterful influence of Boïto, himself a composer. Boïto helped Verdi to scramble upon the shoulders of Verdi, compelled the Verdi of 1887 to forget the Verdi of 1871.

Aïda is pointed out as the great turn in the

style of the composer. It is fuller of Meyerbeerisms than any opera composed since L'Africaine, as full as is Rienzi. Indeed, I doubt if Aïda would have been born had not L'Africaine preceded it. The resemblance to Meyerbeer does not stop at the libretto; there is the same flamboyancy in color, the same barbaric taste for full-blown harmony and exotic tunes — not to mention the similarities in the stories. Wagner had far less to do with Aïda than Meyerbeer, though many believe the contrary. To Rigoletto, in 1851, must we go in the search for the roots of the mature Verdi. In the declamatory monologues of the hunchback jester are the germs of the more intellectual and subtle monologues of Iago and of Falstaff. Il Trovatore contains strong dramatic situations, and if the tower scene is become hackneyed, yet how well devised! In this much-admired, much-sung composition are to be found harmonic straws which indicate to the keen observer the way the musical wind was bound to blow nearly a half-century later. With Traviata Verdi made his first attempt at musical psychologizing. Banal as is the book, there is no denying the power of some of its situations. No, decidedly it will not do to overlook the Verdi of 1850. It would be building musical history without straw.

As among modern German music-dramas Tristan and Isolde is the greatest, so is Otello among

the lyric dramas of Italy — one might as well include France. Falstaff is their comic pendant as Die Meistersinger is to Tristan. Verdi composed Otello when he was past threescore and ten. The fact seems incredible; in its score seethes the passion of middle manhood, the fervors of a flowering maturity. No one ever dreamed of setting Shakespeare in this royally tragic fashion. Rossini fluted with the theme; in Verdi jealousy, love, envy, hatred, are handled by a master. It is a wonderful opera, and a Shakespearean Verdi began at a time when most men are preparing for death. Reversing natural processes, this phenomenal being wrote younger music the older he grew. After Aïda — Otello! After grim tragedy, joyous comedy — Falstaff! If he had survived ninety years, he might have written a comic opera that would have outpointed in wit and humor Johann Strauss!

Otello is a true music-drama; its composer seldom halts to symphonize his events as does Wagner. Boïto, the greatest of librettists, has skeletonized the story; Verdi's music gives it vitality, grace, contour, brilliancy. And yet the Italian poet has not gravely disturbed the old original. It is but a compliment to his gift of absorbing the Shakespearean spirit to say that Iago's Credo, that terrific explosion of nihilism and hatred, does not seem out of perspective in the picture. It is Boïto's intercalation, as are the Cypriote choruses in Act II. All the rest

is pure Shakespeare, barring a few happy transpositions from the Senate speech to the duo at the close of Act I.

Verdi's character-drawing is masterly. Do not let us balk at comparisons, or for that matter at superlatives. No composer ever lived — Mozart and Wagner are alone excepted — who could have so drawn the hot-blooded Moor and the cynical cannikin clinker, set them facing each other in the score, and allowed them to work out their own musical fates, as has Verdi. The key to Otello is its characterization — in a musical sense, of course. But the medium in which Verdi bids them move, their fluidity, their humanity — these are the things that almost defy critical analysis. Whether he is listening to his crafty Ancient, or caressing Desdemona, or raging like the hardy Numean lion, it is always Otello, the Moor of Venice, a living, suffering, loving man — Shakespeare's Otello.

The character does not suggest the flashy operatic, the ranter of the footlights. Nor does Iago, whether as the bluff hero of battles and battles, or the loathsome serpent stinging the other's soul, ever lag dramatically, ever sink into the conventional attitudes of a transpontine melodrama. It is Iago, "the spirit that denies," underlined perhaps, as music must emphasize ever the current emotions of a character. Desdemona is drawn in relief to her furious lover and warrior, and in relief to her cold-blooded maligner.

Verdi has assigned her gentle music, the Ave Maria, the Willow Song. She is a pure white cloud against which as a background are etched the powerful masculine motives of the play. Delicacy and vivacity reveal, bit by bit, the interior of a sweet, troubled soul. The other figures, Cassio, Emilia, are sketches that add to the density of the background without detracting from the chief motives. It is a remarkable libretto.

From the opening storm to the strangling scene the music flows swiftly, as swiftly as the drama. Rich, varied, and eloquent, the orchestra seldom tarries in its vivid and acute commentary. There is scant employment of typical motives — the "kiss" theme in Act I is sounded with psychologic fidelity when Otello dies. In the Handkerchief Trio is there pause for instrumental elaboration; but, in the main, old set forms are avoided, and while there is melodic flow, it does not often crystallize. The duo at the end of Act I, the Credo of unfaith, and Otello's exhortation to the high heavens in Act II; the tremendous outburst in the next act with Iago's sardonically triumphant exclamation, "Behold the lion!" as he plants his scornful heel on the recumbent man — then the final catastrophe! Throughout there are picturesque strokes, effects of massed splendor; and about the tempest-stirred souls is an atmosphere of gloom, of doom, of guilt and melancholy foreboding.

Verdi has felt the moods of his poet and made them his own. The moods, the character-painting, are progressive; Otello, Iago, grow from act to act. The simple-hearted, trusting general with his agonized cry, "Miseria mia," develops into a savage thirsting for blood; "Sangue, sangue!" he howls; he sees blood; the multitudinous music is incarnadine with it. And it is all vocal, it is written for the human voice; the voice, not the orchestra, is the centre of gravity in this astounding drama. Another such Iago, subtle, sinister, evil incarnate, withal a dangerously graceful fellow, — such an impersonation as Maurel's may never be duplicated. And this singing actor had the advantage of Verdi and Boïto's "coaching" in 1887, when the music-drama was produced at Milan. This to show that the music play demands as excellent an Iago as an Otello — indeed, Verdi's first idea of a title was the former — and while there have been several Otellos, only one great Iago has appeared thus far on the contemporary operatic stage.

## BOÏTO'S MEFISTOFELE

Mefistofele by Arrigo Boïto was revived at the Metropolitan Opera House, January 14, 1901, where it was originally heard in December, 1883, and later, January 15, 1896. There is a record that Marie Roze was the first Marguerite of Boïto at the Academy of Music. This

was as early as November 24, 1880. Mefistofele was first heard in Milan, Italy, in 1868 : its *première* was a scene of rioting, and a duel in which Boïto participated occurred later. Public feeling ran very high, for they take their art seriously in Italy. The performance lasted six hours, and was a hopeless failure. Not until the work, pruned, revised, and greatly curtailed, was repeated in Bologna, did Boïto receive a fair hearing. He had composed little previous to this music-drama, preferring journalism and literary work. But Mefistofele was such a challenge to older operatic forms that the work was soon sung in London and elsewhere. Boïto, who is chiefly known as the librettist of the later Verdi, is a man of the highest artistic ideals. His mother was Polish, which may account for his versatility, his poetic gifts. He worked over, re-orchestrated, and polished Mefistofele, and changed Faust from a tenor to a barytone part. And it all smells of the lamp, despite some beautiful pages.

Mefistofele was once music of the future; now it reminds one of some strange, amorphous survival from a remote period. It is such a tremendous attempt to embrace all of Goethe's profound world philosophy, poetry, dramatic symbolism, that it is a failure — a remarkable failure. There is little melodic invention, the prison scene being the top notch of its dramatic passion; while the tenor solo, From the Meadows,

From the Valleys, is strangely reminiscent of the theme from the slow movement of Beethoven's Kreutzer sonata. It is mostly music of the head, not of the heart. Boïto has admirably characterized Mefistofele. His sinister solo, I am the Spirit that Denies, is very striking; the orchestra with its shrill, diabolical whistling suggests Berlioz. And it also suggests in feeling the Honor solo in Verdi's Falstaff and Iago's Credo in Otello. Boïto and Verdi have collaborated so much that they must have absorbed each other's ideas. In the garden scene — a quartet and nothing more — Rigoletto is recalled in the echoing laughter. It seems trifling though trickily difficult. Goethe's Marguerite is not realized. She is hardly ingénue, this flirting girl who so calmly gives a sleeping potion to her mother. And the loving side of her nature is barely outlined.

The Prologue in Heaven reveals Boïto's fine skill in choral writing. Mascagni did not fail to note this when writing the prayer in Cavalleria Rusticana. The scene on the Brocken, the Witches' Sabbath, is very difficult to realize scenically. It contains a big fugue. The dying scene is very strong, dramatically stronger than Gounod's. Gounod set out to write a very effective operatic scena. His trio has in it the fire of the footlights. Boïto is possessed with the tragic beauty of the situation, and so presents a more affecting and dramatically truthful pic-

ture. Calvé has made this scene familiar to New York.

Boïto attempts Part II of Faust. The classical Sabbath leaves us dull, although the composer with his unrhymed dactylic and choriambic verse, and the accompanying music, with its old-fashioned harmonic flavor, endeavors to symbolize the embrace of German and Greek ideals.

The public sees only Faust consoling himself with the dark-haired Elena, and the symbolism falls flat. There is some effort at unity in the welding of the prologue and epilogue by using the opening theme as a chorale finale. The one well-known duo of this second part is La Luna Immobile for soprano and alto. But it is all too episodic to rivet the attention; indeed, Mefistofele is a series of loosely connected episodes. One is constantly reminded of Mascagni's obligations to Boïto. The spoor of Verdi's later style is also here. Boïto seems to have been the pivotal point of the neo-Italian school — himself remaining in the background — while the youngsters profited by his many experimentings. Mefistofele strikes one as an experiment, with Wagner as a model. The most admirable thing in the work is the free treatment of the declamatory passages. In this Boïto set the pace for Verdi.

Boïto's devil is greater than Gounod's. The French devil is not a terrible fellow; he is too

fond of high living, and has a pretty taste in wine. The sardonic, mocking arch fiend of Boïto is more like the popular notion of mankind's enemy. He is familiar with the Powers, and is contemptuous of earthworms. His defiant and evil song of Triumph is the best thing in the work. The solo in the Brocken scene, Here is the World Empty and Round, does not make the same impression as the Denial song. Faust in this version is rather colorless, and more philosopher than lover. Marguerite's most musical episode is when she recalls her lost happiness in the mad scene. And there is much music that is ugly and dreary, for Boïto, no matter what he has accomplished in his unpublished music-drama, is in Mefistofele rather the poet than the composer. Of rich, red, musical blood, of vital figures, we are offered but little. This composition is a product for the closet. It lacks that quality possessed by musicians of meaner attainments than Boïto — the quality of humanity. There are dramatic moments, but the story halts, the symbolism is not appreciable, and the mystic element not quite realized. To give the world a Faust in tone one must be a musical Goethe. Neither Gounod nor Boïto was strong enough to cope with the grandeur and beauty of Goethe's masterpiece among masterpieces. Gounod was a musical sensualist, lacking lofty imagination; Boïto fails in the sensuous temperament and is ever cerebral.

# VIII

## THE ETERNAL FEMININE

### I

A Grand Piano underneath the Bough,
A Gramophone, a Chinese Gong, and Thou
Trying to sing an Anthem off the Key —
Oh, Paradise were Wilderness enow !

— WALLACE IRWIN.

To the girl who plays Chopin ! This sounds like a toast, and a cynic would certainly add : " May her pretty fingers ne'er touch ivory again ! " But it is not a health that I wish to propose, nor yet an exhortation. My notion is to put the question boldly : Can women play Chopin ? Before the rigor of such a query the hardiest-souled male must retire abashed, or write with the usual masculine brutality and lack of finesse. Chopin is the favorite composer of women ; Chopin rules the soul of the girl, and to Chopin is addressed a particular form of worship. This consists of inarticulate gasps, irregular sighs, and the glance which is called psychic. To girls of eighteen or thereabouts Chopin is a religion — a sentimental one. Sympathetic medical men diagnose the symp-

toms and declare them Chopinitis. We have, many of us, suffered severely from it; most musical and unmusical people do. Chopin is in the emotional curriculum of every woman who plays the piano; therefore it shocks one if this question be posed: Can women play Chopin?

Let us be scientific, let us be profound, and let us quote rows of horrid, forbidding figures. I am now proposing a little journey into the misty mid-region of Womanology, for the need of proving my somewhat oblique case. It is crab-wise, this progression, but it may serve. The Nineteenth Century some years ago contained an article on woman's brain by Alexander Sutherland. Written in fullest accord with the aims and ideals of the new woman, the author is yet forced to confess that "the male brain has an advantage of about 10 per cent in weight," and adds that "it is a difference which certainly affords some little foundation for a very ancient belief," said belief being the inferiority of the female intellect to the male intellect. But he proves that 90 per cent of women are the equals of 90 per cent of men. And in the very beginning of his short study he demonstrates that the neurons on the cortex of the brain are quite as numerous in women as in men, and that these neurons "are the instruments of mental energy."

Mere brain weight, then, seems to prove nothing. It is the activity of the neurons which determines the quality of brain power. Music is

denied a place among the more intellectual arts by many great thinkers. Whether this is just or not, considering the vast claims of Bach and Beethoven, I will not say, but one thing is certain: in Chopin emotional sensibility predominates, and as women are supposed to be more emotional than their mates, *ergo* they should play Chopin better. But are they more emotional? Lombroso, who has measured the sighs of sentimental girls, and weighed her tears, says no. In an extraordinary series of public experiments, conducted at Turin, the learned Italian found that woman as compared with man was deficient in tactile sensibility; that she did not record impressions, whether optical, aural, or sensory, as rapidly or with such clear definition as did man. I admit this sounds discouraging, and is enough to give pause to the upward flight of the sex, if that flight is to be tested by scientific analysis. But what is all this testing, weighing, and measuring when faced by the spectacle of a glorious winged creature which sails away on victorious pinions with plumage unruffled by Lombroso and his laboratory logic?

A genuine *féministe*, one who gently felt the female pulse of his century and suavely waved the patient aside, was the late Ernest Renan. If ever a man should have had exalted ideals of womanhood, he was that man. His sister Henriette was his life companion, a veritable staff to him in his erudite studies, and when she

died, he withered, or, rather, grew fat and spiritually flabby. Yet this most subtly feminine of men had the ingratitude to write: "There is no doubt whatever that at the present time feminine instincts occupy more space in the general physiognomy of the world than they did formerly. The world is more exclusively preoccupied just now with frivolities that formerly were looked upon as the exclusive property of women. Instead of asking men for great achievements, bold enterprises, and heroic labors, the women ask them for riches only, to satisfy a vulgar taste. The general movement of the world has put itself at the service of the instincts of woman, not those splendid instincts through which they display more clearly than men can, perhaps, the divine ideal of our nature, but the lower instincts which form the least noble portion of her vocation." This was written in 1855. What would Renan have written in the twentieth century?

We have now laboriously collated the opinions of three men — Sutherland on the brain, Lombroso on the sensibility, and Renan on the moral nature of woman. The general tenor of these three messages is hardly as hopeful as the new woman could desire. Let us leave the chill topic in all its frozen splendor and turn to the latter part of my question — Chopin. What is Chopin playing?

That Chopin was a Pole who went from War-

saw to Paris, there won fame, the love of George Sand, misery, and a sad death are facts that even schoolgirls lisp. The pianist-composer belongs to the stock figures of musical fiction. He was slender, had consumption, slim, long fingers, played vaporous moon-haunted music, and after his desertion by Sand coughed himself off the contemporary canvas in the most genteel and romantic manner. I like to recall George Moore's description of Robert Louis Stevenson: "I think of Mr. Stevenson," he wrote in his Confessions, "as a consumptive youth weaving garlands of sad flowers with pale weak hands, or leaning to a large plate-glass window and scratching thereon certain exquisite profiles with a diamond pencil." The piano was Chopin's window, and upon it he traced arabesques, tender and heroic, sorrowful and capricious. All this is Chopin romantically conventionalized by artist-biographers and associates. The real man, as nearly as we dare describe a real man — was of a gentle, slightly acid temper, and of a refined nature, who had a talent for playing the piano that was without parallel, and a positive genius in composition. His life was stupid, if compared with an actor's or a sailor's, and was devoid of public incident. We can see him giving a few piano lessons to prim, chaperoned misses of the Boulevard Saint-Germain before each noon; in the afternoons making calls or studying; in the evening at the

opera for an hour, later in the enchanted circle of countesses who listened to his weaving music, and afterward a space for breathing at a fashionable café before retiring. Public appearances were rare; this aristocrat loved not the larger world and its democratic criticisms. His was a temperament prone to self-coddling. Only to the favored few did he reveal the richness of his inner life. That he suffered intensely from petty annoyances before which the ordinary man would hunch his shoulders was but the result of a hyperæsthetic delicacy. An æolian harp! you cry, and the simile is a happy one. But no wind harp has ever discoursed such music as Chopin's piano.

And then there is the national element, perhaps the most fascinating of all the fibres of his many-colored soul. Chopin was Polish, he loved Poland madly, yet Chopin never laid down his music to take up arms for his native land, fight or die for, as did his countrywoman Emilia Plater. Being infinitely more feminine than any woman, Chopin sang his dreams, his disillusions, into his music, and put his fiery patriotism into his polonaises. His range is not so wide as Beethoven's; but it is quite as intense. His mazurkas, valses, nocturnes, studies, preludes, impromptus, scherzos, ballades, polonaises, fantaisies, variations, concertos, cradle-song, barcarolle, sonatas, and various dances are the most intimate music written for any instrument. A

lyric poet, he touched us to the core, and with exquisite tentacles drew our soul to his. He is dead, yet a vital musical force to-day. To play Chopin one must have acute sensibilities, a versatility of mood, a perfect mechanism, the heart of a woman and the brain of a man. He is not all elegant languors and melancholy simperings. A capricious, even morbid, temperament is demanded, and there must be the fire that kindles and the power that menaces; a fluctuating, wavering rhythm yet a rhythmic sense of excessive rectitude; a sensuous touch, yet a touch that contains an infinity of colorings; supreme musicianship — Chopin was a musician first, poet afterwards; a big nature overflowing with milk and honey; and, last of all, you must have suffered the tribulations of life and love, until the nerves are whittled away to a thin, sensitive edge and the soul is aflame with the joy of death. Does this sound like mocking at the impossible? All this and much more that is subtle and indescribable are needed to interpret Chopin. And now do you see that I am right when I declare that most women play his music mechanically?

Who has played Chopin in a remarkable manner? The list is not large. Chopin himself must have been the greatest of all, though Liszt declared that his physical strength was not able to cope with the more heroic of his works. Liszt, Tausig, Rubinstein, Essipoff, Joseffy,

Karl Heymann, Pachmann, and Paderewski — a somewhat attenuated number of names. Of course there were many others; but these represent supreme mastery in various phases of the master's music. The real pupils all claimed to have inherited the magic formula, the tradition. To-day the best-known Chopin players are Joseffy, Rosenthal, Pachmann, Paderewski, and others. Each has his virtues, and to define their limitations, enunciate their excellences, would be critical hair-splitting. Nearly all the younger professional men and women play Chopin after approved academic models. He is expounded by æstheticians and taught throughout the land. He is mauled, maimed, thumped, and otherwise maltreated at conservatories, and the soul of him is seldom invoked, but floats, a wraith with melancholy eyes, over nearly every piano in Christendom. There have been and are charming interpreters of his music among women pianists. Paderewski told me that he never heard the mazurkas better played than by Marcelline, Princess Czartoryska, a beloved pupil of Chopin's. We have never had the mazurkas so charmingly played here as by the wilful Vladimir de Pachmann; yet not even his dearest foe would dower that artist with great mental ability. But he is more feminine than any woman in his tactile sensibilities. Joseffy has far more intellectuality; Paderewski is more poetic. All three are, as all musical artists

should be, feminine in their delicacy of temperament.

Where, then, does woman enter this race, a race in which sex traditions are topsy-turvied? If women are deficient in brain weight, in nervous and spiritual powers, how is it that they dare attempt Chopin at all?

Because, patient reader — and now I begin to draw in the very large loop I have made — men of science deal with the palpable, and the time for measuring and weighing the impalpable has not yet arrived. Because there is no sex in music, and because you may not be very moral or very intellectual, and yet play Chopin like "a little god" — as Pachmann would say. And now for my most triumphant contention: if the majority of women play Chopin abominably — so do the majority of men!

## II

"It may indeed," answered Amelia; "and I am so sensible of it that unless you have a mind to see me faint before your face, I beg you will order me something — a glass of water if you please." And then that most fascinating chronicler, Henry Fielding, Esq., proceeds to relate the further history of Captain Booth's good lady, but not until Mrs. Bennet infuses some "hartshorn drops" into a glass of water for her. All this was about 1750. Since then

Miss Austen and her troop of youthful creatures, swooning to order, have stolen with charming graces across the canvas of fiction; the young woman of 1750, with her needles and her scruples, has quite vanished; and passed away is the girl who played the piano in the stiff Victorian drawing-rooms of our mothers. It has always seemed to me that slippery hair-cloth sofas and the Battle of Prague dwelt in mutual harmony. And now at the beginning of the century the girls who devote time to the keyboard merely for the purpose of social display are almost as rare as the lavender water ladies of morbid sensibilities in the Richardson and Fielding novels. It was one of the new English essayists who wrote of The Decay of Sensibility. He meant the Jane Austen girl; but I wonder if the musical girl of the old sort may not be also set down for study — the study we accord to rare and disappearing types. Yet never has America been so musical, never so crowded the recitals of popular pianists, while piano manufacturers bewail the day's brevity, so eager for their instruments is the public. Here is a pretty paradox: the piano is passing and with it the piano girl, — there really was a piano girl, — and more music was never made before in the land!

Women and music have been inseparable in the male imagination since the days when the morning stars sang cosmic chorals in the vasty

blue. The Old Testament tells of dancing and lyrics that accompanied many sacred offices, and we all recall those music-mad maids who slew Bacchus for a mere song. Women played upon shawm and psaltery, and to her fate went dancing with measured tones the daughter of Jephthah. I am not sure but Judith crooned a melody for the ravished ears of Holofernes. An early keyed instrument was named in honor of woman — the virginal — and the first printed piece of English music was called Parthenia. On the title-page is represented a simpering and rather blowzy young woman of Rubens-like physique, playing upon a virginal, her fingers in delightfully impossible curlicues. This piece was engraved in 1611. A variety of pictures, some as early as 1440, show the inevitable girl seated at the spinet, or clavichord. There is a painting by Jan Steen in the London National Gallery, depicting an awkward Dutch miss fingering the keys, and a Gerard Ter Borch at the Royal Museum, Berlin, reveals a woman of generous breadth playing upon a violoncello. She appears to be handling her bow like a professional; and she is, strange to say, left-handed. Ample are the facts relating to the important rôle enacted by woman as interpretative artist. To no less an authority has been ascribed — wrongly, I suspect — a certain aphorism which places in curious sequence wine, woman, and song. It was the woman who entertained that then was con-

sidered. She pleased the rude warrior, fatigued by the chase or war, and with her dainty tinklings soothed his sottish brain. Like music, woman was a handmaiden. With the emancipation of the art from churchly rubric came its worldly victories. In the brilliant spaces of the concert room the piano was king, and not seldom a king subdued by queenly fingers. The male virtuoso, surely a thing of gorgeous vanities, soon had his feminine complement. The woman who played the piano appeared in Europe; and there were those that predicted the millennium. In the eighteenth century pianos had sconces in which burned candles, while charming women, hair powdered and patch on face, played Haydn, attempted Scarlatti, and greatly wondered at the famously difficult music of Mozart. Beethoven, a loutish young man of unbearable habits, wrote music that was not to be thought of — it was simply not playable. To be sure, a few grand ladies who gave themselves superior airs of culture — as do Ibsen girls to-day — attempted the Beethoven sonatas in the presence of the composer, who, quite deaf, lolled complacently in their drawing-rooms and betimes picked his teeth with the candle snuffers. But there was sterner stuff in the next generation. After Camilla Pleyel came Madame de Belleville-Oury, admired of Chopin, and the transition to the modern piano-playing women, Clara Schumann, Annette Essipoff, Sophie Menter, Teresa Carreño, was an easy one.

The latter half of this century has witnessed an intense devotion to a barren ideal. Years previous to the advent of the sewing-machine there burst upon the civilized globe a musical storm of great magnitude. Every girl whose parents respected themselves was led almost manacled to the keyboard, and there made to play at least one hour out of the twenty-four. This was before the age of eight; after that crumby and pinafore period an hour was added, and O, the tortures of her generation and the generation that succeeded her! Veritable slaves of the ivory, they worked like the Niebelungs for a stern Alberich, who pocketed the hoard of their fathers and rapped their cold, thin, and despairing fingers with a lead pencil — one usually "made in Germany." With what infantile malignancy was regarded the lead pencil of the German music-master! Why, even as I write, my very sentence assumes an Ollendorffian cast because of the harrowing atmosphere conjured up by that same irritable Teutonic pencil-wielder. Piano music of those days was a thing of horror. Innumerable variations and the sonatina that stupefied were supplemented by diabolical finger studies without end. One hour after breakfast, one hour after luncheon, and in the evening a little music to soothe digestion and drive away dull drink — something of this sort was the daily musical scheme of our natural rulers. Every girl played the piano. Not

to play the instrument was a stigma of poverty. The harp went out with the Byronic pose, though harp-playing was deemed "a fine, lady-like accomplishment" until the Civil War. But a harp is a troublesome instrument "to keep in order"; it needs skilled attention — above all, careful tuning. Now the piano is cheaper than the harp — I mean some pianos — and it is the only instrument I know of that is played upon with evident delight when out of tune. Even the banjo is tuned at times; the average piano so rarely that it resents the operation and speedily relapses below pitch. Because of its unmusical nature, a very uncomplaining beast of burden, the piano was bound to drive out the harp; it is more easily "worked," and, by reason of its shape, a more useful piece of furniture. Atop of a piano may be placed anything, from a bonnet to an ice-cream freezer; indeed, stories are told of heartless persons using it for a couch; and once a party of French explorers discovered on the coast of Africa an individual, oily but royal, who had removed the action and wires of a grand piano and used the interior for his permanent abode. The unfortunate instrument had drifted ashore from a wreck.

Other reasons, too, there are for the supplanting of the harp by its more stolid half-brother, the piano — bigger brother, a noisier, more assertive one, and a magnificent stop-gap for the creaking pauses of the drawing-room machinery.

And how nobly it covers thin talk with a dense mantle of crackling tones! A provoker of speech, an urger to after-dinner eloquence, the piano will be remembered in the hereafter as the greatest social implement of last century's latter half.

Liszts in petticoats have been so numerous during the past twenty-five years as to escape classification. It was the girl who did not play that was singled out as an oddity. For one Sonia Kovalesky and her rare mastery of mathematics there were a million slaves of the ivory. Not even the sewing-machine routed the piano, though it dealt it a dangerous body blow. Treadles and pedals are not so far asunder, and a neat piano technique has been found quite useful by the ardent typewriter. What this present generation of children has to be especially thankful for is its immunity from useless piano practice. Unless there is discovered a sharply defined aptitude, a girl is kept away from the stool and pedals. Instead of the crooked back —in Germany known as the piano back—and relentless technical studies, our young woman golfs, cycles, rows, runs, fences, dances, and pianolas! While she once wearied her heart playing Gottschalk, she now plays tennis, and she freely admits that tennis is greater than Thalberg. Recall the names of all the great women's colleges, recall their wonderful curriculums, and note with unprejudiced eyes their

scope and the comparatively humble position occupied by music. In a word, I wish to point out that piano-playing as an accomplishment is passing. Girls play the piano as a matter of course when they have nimble fingers and care for it. Life has become too crowded, too variously beautiful, for a woman without marked musical gifts to waste it at the piano.

Begun as a pastime, a mere social adjunct of the overfed, music, the heavenly maid, was pressed into unwilling service at the piano, and at times escorted timid youths to the proposing point, or eked out the deadly lethargy of evenings in respectable homes. Girls had to pull the teeth of this artistic monster, the pianoforte, else be accounted frumps without artistic or social ambitions. Unlike that elephant which refused to play a Bach fugue on the piano, because, as the showman tearfully explained, the animal shudderingly recognized the ivory of the tusks of its mother, the girl of the middle century went about her task muddled in wits, but with matrimony as her ultimate goal. To-day she has forsaken the "lilies and languors" of Chopin, and the "roses and raptures" of Schumann, and if she must have music, she goes to a piano recital and hears a great artist interpret her favorite composer, thus unconsciously imitating the Eastern potentate who boasted that he had his dancing done for him. The new girl is too busy to play the piano unless she has the gift; then she

plays it with consuming earnestness. We listen to her, for we know that this is an age of specialization, an age when woman is coming into her own, be it nursing, electoral suffrage, or the writing of plays; so poets no longer make sonnets to our Ladies of Ivories, nor are budding girls chained to the keyboard. Never has the piano been so carefully studied as it is to-day, and, paradoxical as it may sound, never has the tendency of music been diverted to currents so contrary to the genius of the instrument. All this is better for woman — and for the development of her art along broader, nobler lines. The tone-poem and music-drama are now our ideals, and I dare publish my belief that in this year of grace there has been born one who will live to see the decay of the piano recital. He may be a centenarian before this change is wrought, but witness it he will, for music, of all arts, changes most its vesture.

III

Balzac, master of souls, knower of the heart feminine, made his lovely Princesse de Cadignan say to the enamored Daniel d'Arthez: "I have often heard miserable specimens regret that they were women, wish that they were men; I have always looked upon them with pity. . . . If I had to choose I would still prefer to be a woman. A fine pleasure it is to have to owe one's triumph to strength, to all the powers that

are given you by the laws made by you! But when we see you at our feet, uttering and doing sillinesses, is it not then an intoxicating happiness to feel one's self the weakness that triumphs? When we succeed we are obliged to keep silent under pain of losing our empire. Beaten women are still obliged to keep silent through pride. The silence of the slave frightens the master."

This was written in 1839. If Balzac had lived a half-century, he would have painted full-length portraits of women who keep quiet neither in triumph nor in defeat; and at whose feet pedals, not men, register new emotional experiences — for the pedals of the piano are the soul of it. To be ashamed of one's sex nowadays would be an insane confession wrung from some poor overworked creature, one to whom the French novelist might refuse even the name of woman. Females may deny the beauty of being born to wear petticoats; women, never. Indeed, the boot is now on the masculine leg. As the current phraseology runs, Woman has found herself. She has also found a panacea for irritated vanity and indigestion, at one time called in romances a broken heart. This prophylactic is art; and when it is used intelligently, misery flies forth from the window as music opens the door.

Once, for the sheer fun of it, I made an imaginary classification of music which various heroines of fiction preferred, or, rather, might prefer

— for many of them are, as you know, tone-deaf. Mr. Howells remarked this years ago. But consider Clarissa Harlowe, or any of the immortal Jane's brood — do they not all suggest musical possibilities? What a paper that would be to read before a mothers' meeting on a sultry day in September! — The Musical Tastes of Fiction's Heroines. And with what facile logic, the logic of numbers, a clever girl could unhorse her ruder opponents. The theme fascinates me; I am loath to leave it. Think of the year 1800! Beethoven had written some piano sonatas, but was not very well known abroad. In London town there were still harpsichords, and Scarlatti and Mozart. The modern grand piano was a dream that nestled in the later sonatas of Beethoven — and in the brain of their maker. Tone was not thought of; while a pearly touch, smooth scales, and crisp little rhythms were affected by such women as spared the time to practise from their social duties. The piano music of the eighteenth century was written for women, is woman's music. All these virginals, spinets, clavecins, clavichords, harpsichords, are they not feminine? Are they not the musical rib plucked by an amiable fate from the side of the masculine church organ? Historical retrospects gall the mind at all times, but it may not be amiss to consider the century's piano music which preceded ours. Out of the old dance suites burgeoned latter-

day piano music. Those graceful writers of old Italy and old France made gay melodies, full of the artificial life of their time, of their surroundings. You catch glimpses of delicate faces, with patches, powdered heads, courtly struttings, and the sounds of courtly wooing. The stately minuetto, lively courantes, decorous allemandes, smooth sarabands, tripping gavottes and gigues, — all these, and many more with high-colored titles, enchanted our great-great-grandmothers. The more tragic note was not missing, either. They had L'Homicide and the Fair Murderess, and any number of pieces named after tears, anger, caprice, sorrow, revenge and desire. Animals and the gods of Greece and Rome were quoted; flanked by wax candles, with suitors smirking at the side of them, and peering in front of them, fair women played music, played it with genteel gravity or bewitching coquetry; played Scarlatti and Emanuel Bach, and all for the love of art — and perhaps a matrimonial future. Let it be remarked, *en passant*, that the keyboard, vastly modified, developed and improved as it is, is still a favorite weapon of feminine offence. Just here get down your Browning from the shelf and consider A Toccata of Galuppi's.

Of Bach, the giant, we do not read in the diaries, letters, and books of this fashionable epoch. That grim old forge-master of fugues would hardly have appealed to the dreams of

fair women, even had they been cognizant of his existence. Handel's piano music was more to their taste; his suites, classical and solid in character, are full of brightly said things, and lie well for the instrument. Joseph Haydn, owing much to Bach's son Emanuel, wrote pleasing music, light music, for the piano. His sonatas are not difficult, were not difficult for those ladies who could fluently finger Scarlatti. This Italian, with his witty skippings, rapid hand-crossings, and implacable vivacity, is still rainbow gold for most feminine wrists. Mozart, the sweetly lyric, the mellifluous and ever gay Mozart, made sonatas as gods carve the cosmos. Every form he touched he beautified. The piano sonatas, written for money, written with ease, were also written with both eyes on the fair amateur of the period. She admired Mozart more than Haydn; his music was melodious, his decorative patterns prettier. So Mozart raged in the hearts of the ladies, and slender fingers troubled the chaste outlines of his sonatas. His eighteenth sonata, preceded by a fantasia in the same key — C minor — alone impeded the flight of these butterflies. In it were mutterings of the music that awed and thrilled in Don Giovanni, and it was a precursor of Beethoven and his mighty thunderings.

Behold the conqueror approaches, the Bonaparte, the Buonarroti, the Balzac of music — Ludwig van Beethoven. In the track of his

growling tempests followed women, nobly nurtured, charming women of fashion, Nanette Streicher, Baroness Ertmann, Julia Guicciardi, Thérèse, Bettina, and many more besides. They played for him, and he, great genius and despiser of idle conventions, stretched his stout short body out upon drawing-room couches.

It is not a pretty picture this, but is a characteristic. It must please latter-day pagans who flout the niceties of society. Not all the Beethoven sonatas were admired to the studying point. The early ones — mere exercises of a young athlete juggling with the weapons of his grandsire — alone called for commendation. Dedicated to Haydn, the first three did not excite the ire of critics or teachers. But as the man grew, as he felt, suffered, and knew, then his canvases began to excite fear and repulsion. "Why these gloomy tints, Herr van Beethoven?" they cried, and listened eagerly to his rivals, the Wölffls, the Gelineks, the Hummels. There is a modishness even in the art of writing for the piano, and Beethoven despised modishness, as would have Diana of the Ephesians the millinery of Lutetia. So he was neglected for a half-century, and the long-fingered, long-haired virtuosi overran Europe, with their variations, their fantasias, their trills, and their trickeries. From Hummel to Thalberg effect was their god, and before the shrine of the titillating, the ornamental and the suave, womankind prostrated

herself, pouring out homage and gold — the latter provided by patient fathers and husbands. It was a carnage, a musical rout, and a superior warrior like Liszt trailed thousands of scalps after his chariots during triumphal tours. The mediæval dancing manias were as nothing when compared with the hysteria evoked by the new Pied Piper of Hungary. Chopin never had the physique, and Mendelssohn was too moral, to copy Liszt. These two men wrote lovely music, feminine music; while down in Vienna a young man named Schubert died, after writing incomparable songs and much beautiful piano music. His sonatas are not so feminine in texture as his musical Moments, impromptus and dances. This music is made for woman, with its intimate, tender feeling, its loose and variegated structure. Von Weber composed chivalric sonatas and that marvellous epitome of the dance, The Invitation. Schumann, broken in fingers through too curious experimentings, dreamed twilight music, which his gifted wife Clara interpreted to an incredulous world.

Since then the rest is history. Women virtuosi are as plentiful as the shining sands, beginning with Clara Schumann and ending with the prodigy of yesterday. Such thunderers as Sophie Menter and Teresa Carreño, women of iron will and great muscular power, and a subtle interpreter like Annette Essipoff, challenge men in their own sphere, and relatively hold

their own. I say relatively; and now comes into view a serious question. It is this: Should women essay the music of all composers? The answer is in the affirmative, for who shall assert that a severe course of Bach, Beethoven, and Brahms may result in aught else but good. But do women interpret all composers with equal success? The answer is here decidedly a negative one. Though I have heard Menter play Liszt's rhapsodies with overwhelming brilliancy, though I have listened to Carreño in amazement as she crashed out Chopin's F sharp minor polonaise on her Steinway, yet I know that the brawn and brain of this pair are exceptional. Half a dozen such do not appear during a century. Therefore big tonal effects, called orchestral by the critics, are usually not to be found in the performances of women. For that reason I enjoy the playing of women who are genuinely feminine in their style — Essipoff or Madame Zeisler. Smoothness, neatness, delicacy, brilliancy, and a certain grace are common enough. The average woman pianist is a hard student, and strives to achieve that which men easily accomplish. As a rule she has finger facility, a plentiful lack of rhythm, and no particular interpretative power — exactly the qualities of the average male pianist. When Maud Powell plays Bach or Beethoven on her violin we are amazed and say, "Why, this is virile!" When Fanny Bloomfield-Zeisler delivers the scherzo from the Litolff

concerto, we are surprised — not at her swiftness, ease, or delicacy, but at her nervous force and bravura — these latter being selfishly annexed by men as eminently masculine attributes. Are they? Certain feminine Wagner singers possess them, and in opera they are accepted as a matter of course. A genuine paradox, is it not?

The muscular conformation of a woman's arm militates against her throwing a stone as far as a man; it also operates adversely in modern piano-playing, where the triceps muscles are a necessity for a broad, sonorous tone. I have considered the pros and cons of emotional intensity in writing of woman as a Chopin player, and shall not again traverse that barren and ungrateful region. The intellect remains to be discussed. Are women intellectual in the interpretative sense? Yes. Without hesitation I answer this question, for music, apart from the creative side, is a feminine art, and one in which woman's intuitions lead her many leagues toward success. That women have as yet — you mark my use of a future contingency! — that women have as yet exhibited powers of interpretation as keen, as original, or even on a par with men, I am not prepared to say. Illuminative in Bach or Beethoven they are not, though delightfully poetic in Schumann and Chopin. I have never heard a woman play the Hammer-Klavier Sonata, opus 106, of Beethoven with force, lucidity, or imaginative lift.

*Enfin:* The lesson of the years seems to be that women can play anything written for the piano, and play it well. In all the music of the eighteenth century, in the sonatas of Haydn, Mozart, and the early Beethoven, in Hummel, Weber, Schubert, Mendelssohn, some of Schumann, some of Chopin, a goodly portion of Liszt, all of Field, Heller, Hiller, Moszkowski, Grieg, Scharwenka, and a moiety of Brahms,— all these composers have been essayed with success. Bach's Well-tempered Clavichord should be the bread and butter of a woman's musical *menu;* it should begin and end her day. One may quote Balzac again — that dear Princesse de Cadignan, sometimes called Madame la Duchesse Maufrigneuse, "Women know how to give to their words a peculiar saintliness; they communicate to them I know not what of vibration, which extends the sense of their ideas and lends them profundity; if later, their charmed auditor no longer recalls what they have said, the object has been completely attained, which is the proper quality of eloquence." And of this species of eloquence is a woman's playing of Bach and Beethoven and Brahms. It is often charming; but is it ever great, spiritual, moving art?

The woman question — is it not one to be shunned? I mean the question, not the theme itself, though one may recommend Laura Marholm's volumes. Frau Marholm is a Scandinavian, and Northern women must have been

bound with iron social gyves, to judge by the quality of their protestant literature. Ibsen, Björnson, even Strindberg — whose erratic pendulum swings to the other extreme — are full of the heady polemics of sex. Sex — why, one sickens of the subject after reading problem plays and novels. To all American women between the ages of eighteen and eighty I say study Laura Marholm's Studies in the Psychology of Woman. The dissatisfied ones, those who really believe all they read, may perhaps realize how much better off is The Unquiet Sex — this capital phrase is of Helen Watterson Moody's coining — in America. Little wonder that there is a woman movement in Europe. For its psychology read Marholm. Best of all, here is a woman telling us secrets, secrets not to be captured by men watchful of the Sphinx that Defies. And it is a sad corrective for masculine presumption, masculine vanity. *We* are only tolerated. Some of us have known that for years; here it is elevated to the dignity of a psychological system. These long-haired, soft-eyed animals, as Guy de Maupassant described them, are our true critics weighing us ever in scales that are mortifyingly candid, excusing us if they love us, but after all only *tolerating us*, allowing the lords of creation to kneel in humble attitudes at the shrine and rewarded at the end by — toleration. And if this is the case on the Continent, where the equality of women

is as yet a half-hatched idea, how is it in America, where she is queen, queen from kitchen to palace? I think Mrs. Marholm herself would be amazed, and mayhap after five years' residence here would write a book about the Wrongs of Man. Her Six Famous Women betrays the writer's keenness of vision, the Studies reveal breadth of idea and judgments. She does not belong to the "Shrieking Sisterhood." She is a woman, a defender of home and family. I assure you I enjoyed her book far better than Zola's Fecondité — that most miraculously dull and moral tract. Tolstoy is the remote parent of both books, though Marholm has her own feminine point of attack. No man may hope to understand women as does a woman. It was Zangwill, I think, who said that all women writers are of value — do they not tell us the secrets of their sex? This is hardly polite, but it is true. When the "messages" of George Eliot and Charlotte Bronté have grown stale from usage — all truths breed rust after a time — their unconscious self-portraitures will preserve them from those giant moths, the critics.

The Marholm knows better than any envious male the limitations of woman as artist, politician, and writer. In the admirable study of Mrs. Besant she writes: "She has always possessed the wholly feminine capacity of assimilating the most varied and incompatible mental food, without disturbance or indigestion, and of giving it

forth with a certain accuracy; her brain was like a photographic plate upon which the exposed picture is clearly and mechanically printed. These characteristics, the quick perception and exact repetition, are frequently praised by professors who examine feminine students, and many have declared that in eagerness for knowledge and ability to acquire it, women excel men. It is undeniable that in these characteristics they excel most men; it would be a pity if most men excelled them, for these characteristics rest upon the lesser power and capacity for original thought, independent selection, and deeper affinity to the appropriate idea; they depend upon a mechanical instead of an organic process."

This is not a pleasing paragraph, but it shows the writer's style of argument. She girds with something approaching violence at the milk-and-water men of the day, declaring that Woman's Emancipation is the result of some deficiency in modern manhood. However, read Marholm and draw your own pictures of what women should or should not be. A charming woman told me that she had asked Jean de Reszké if he cared to sing Romeo or Tristan with any particular singer.

"I always sing to my ideal woman," replied the artist. And I fancy that we all pursue that illuding composite. It is Woman who composes all the great music, paints all the great pictures, writes all the great poems — Woman the inspirer

of all art! Is *She*, after all, our coast of Bohemia? Then mankind, from the torrid time of undifferentiated protozoa, has been frantically striving to acquire a footing upon that fascinating territory.

# IX

# AFTER WAGNER—WHAT?

## I

### THE CAPRICE OF THE MUSICAL CAT

Few critics are prophets honored in their own musical country, and but one or two in a generation possess *prévoyance* enough to predict the way the musical cat will jump. The antics of that exotic feline since the day Richard Wagner pinched its tail and bade it leap through the large and rather gaudy hoop of the music-drama, have been mystifying and extraordinary. It coquetted with Brahms, it visited Italy, and for a time took up its abode in the house of Grieg.

In a word, caprice of a deep-seated order has marked the progress of music during the past half-century. I am not speaking now of America, but of the world at large. Chopin died in 1849, Schumann in 1856; with them were buried the ideals that lit the lantern of the romantic school. It has flickered on, this sweet, phosphorescent signal of revolt, but chiefly in the music of imitators. The strong light of the

torch first firmly held by Bach and passed on by men like Mozart, Beethoven, and Brahms was not the sort desired of the dreamers. For them the twilight and the strange-winged creatures bred in the twilight; the classical composers — who were romantics in their time — loved too much the luminary of day, and had few favors for melancholy and moonshine.

Then came Richard Wagner, revolutionist, genius by the grace of God, and a marvellous moulder of other men's ideas. We are no longer alarmed by the senile warnings of the extreme right camp; as for the crazy boasts and affirmations of the musical romantics, we who know our Wagner smile at the godlike things claimed for him. He had genius and his music is genuine; but it is music for the theatre, for the glow of the footlights; rhetorical music is it, and it ever strives for effect. That this cannot be music to touch the tall stars of Bach and Beethoven we know; yet why compare the two methods when they strive for such other and various things? Wagner arrogated everything to his music-dramas; this he had to do or else be left lonely, bawling his wares to unsympathetic listeners in the market-place of art. But he did not hesitate to invade its most sacrosanct precincts to vend his musical merchandise. And we must not criticise him for this — such auctioneering in his case was absolutely necessary.

Wagner caught up into a mighty synthesis all

the loose threads of romanticism, all the widely severed strands of opera. He studied Bach and Beethoven, and utilized the polyphony of the one, the symphonic orchestra of the other; then, knowing that opera as opera on Rossinian lines had reached its apogee, and that Mozart and Gluck contained in solution the very combinations he needed, he, like the audacious alchemist, the cunning Cagliostro that he was, made a composite that at first smacked of German and then of Italian. He ran through his Rienzi, Flying Dutchman, Lohengrin, Tannhäuser days, strenuously testing his originality the meanwhile; and when the time had arrived — in his case late in life — he calmly threw overboard old formulas and served us the Ring and the rest of his masterpieces. It was the most deliberate chase after and assumption of genius the world had ever witnessed; and, strange as it seems, the wings that carried Wagner, Icarus-wise, to the vistas of the sun showed no weaknesses, no threatened and precipitous meltings To change the figure: We know that this conscious composer perfected his style with other men's ideas; he beat, bruised, battered into shape a method of his own, strong, individual, and all-sufficing for his purpose. He knew that certain subjects could stand operatic treatment, and that your opera orchestra must not be a big guitar, nor yet as symphonic as Beethoven's. With the prescience of genius

he helped himself to precisely the material he wanted. How well he knew his needs we all realize when we listen to Die Meistersinger and Tristan and Isolde.

George Bernard Shaw, in a long since vanished and brilliant essay, held that "Wagner, like most artists who have great intellectual power, was dominated in the technical work of his gigantic scores by so strong a regard for system, order, logic, symmetry, and syntax that, when in the course of time his melody and harmony become perfectly familiar to us, he will be ranked with Handel as a composer whose extreme regularity of procedure must make his work appear dry to those who cannot catch his dramatic inspiration. If Nordau, having no sense of that inspiration, had said: 'This fellow, whom you all imagine to be the creator of a new heaven and a new earth in music out of a chaos of poetic emotion, is really an arrant pedant and formalist,' I should have pricked up my ears and listened to him with some curiosity, knowing how good a case a really keen technical critic could make out for that view."

Wagner was the last of the great romantics; he closed a period, did not begin one. It is the behavior of the musical cat — to resume our illustration — since Wagner's death that is so puzzling to the prophets. The sword and the cloak, the midnight alarums and excursions sentimental, occupied for long the foreground;

but music discarded adventure when adventure was reëntering the land of letters in the person of Robert Louis Stevenson, — Stevenson who wore his panache so bravely in the very presence of Émile Zola and other evangelists of the drab in fiction. A curious return to soberer ideals of form was led by Johannes Brahms. I may add that this leadership was unsought, indeed was hardly apprehended, by the composer. A more unpromising figure for a musical Messiah would have been difficult to find. Wagner, a brilliant, disputatious, magnetic man, waged a personal propaganda; Brahms, far from being the sympathetic, cultured man of the world that Wagner was, lived quietly and thought highly. His were Wordsworthian ideals; he abhorred the world, the flesh, and the devil, — this last person being incarnate for him in the marriage of music with the drama. Yet his music is alive to-day; alive with a promise and a potency that well-nigh urge me to fatidical utterance, so sane is it, so noble in contrast, so richly fruitful in treatment. A sympathetic writer he is, and also a man who deals largely in the humanities of his art. Learned beyond the dreams of Wagner, Brahms buried his counterpoint in roses, set it to blooming in the Old-World gardens of Germany; decked his science with the sweet, mad tunes of Hungary, withal remaining a Teuton, and one in the direct line of Bach, Beethoven, and Schubert.

And yet Brahms dreams of pure white staircases that scale the infinite. A dazzling, dry light floods his mind at times, and you hear the rustling of wings, — wings of great, terrifying monsters, hippogriffs of horrid mien; hieroglyphic faces, faces with stony stare, menace your imagination. He can bring down within the compass of the octave moods that are outside the pale of mortals. He is a magician, often spectral; yet his songs have the homely lyric fervor and concision of Robert Burns. A groper after the untoward, I have been amazed at certain bars in his F sharp minor sonata, and was stirred by the moonlight tranquillity in the slow movement of the F minor sonata. He is often dull, muddy-pated, obscure, and maddeningly slow. Then lovely music wells out of the mist; you are enchanted, and cry, "Brahms, master, anoint again with thy precious chrism our thirsty eyelids!"

Brahms is an inexorable form maker. His four symphonies, his three piano sonatas, the choral works and chamber music — are they not all living testimony to his admirable management of masses? He is not a great colorist. For him the pigments of Makart, Wagner, and Théophile Gautier are unsought. Like Puvis de Chavannes, he is a Primitive. Simple, flat tints, primary and cool, are superimposed upon an enormous rhythmic versatility and a strenuousness of ideation. Ideas — noble, profundity-

embracing ideas — he has. They are not in the smart, epigrammatic, flashing style of your little man. He disdains racial allusions. He is a planetary Teuton. You seek in vain for the geographical hints that chain Grieg to the map of Norway. Brahms's melodies are world typical, not cabined and confined to his native soil. This largeness of utterance, lack of polish, and a disregard for the politeness of his art do not endear him to the unthinking. Yet, what a master miniaturist he is in his little piano pieces, his intermezzi! There he catches the tender sigh of childhood, or the faint intimate flutterings of the heart stirred by desire. Feminine he is as is no woman; virile, as few men. The sinister fury, the mocking, drastic fury of his first rhapsodies, — true Brahmsodies, — how they pierce to the core the pessimism of our age!

He reminds me more of Browning than does Schumann. The full-pulsed humanity, the dramatic — yes, Brahms is sometimes dramatic, not theatric — modes of analysis, the relentless tracking to their ultimate lair of motives, are Browning's; but the composer never loses his grip on the actualities of structure. A great sea is his music, and it sings about the base of that mighty mount we call Beethoven. Brahms takes us to subterrene depths; Beethoven is for the heights. Strong lungs are needed in the company of these giants.

Now comes another enigmatic tangent of

music, the heavenly maid. The seed planted by Berlioz and carefully husbanded by Liszt has come to a pretty and a considerable harvest. Of Liszt, whose revolutionary music the world has not yet recognized, this is not the time to write. Only volumes can do justice to his rare genius as a man, artist, and composer. I spoke of the death of Chopin and Schumann stifling the aspirations of the romantics; nothing ever dies, and by an elliptical route there has returned to us something of the fire and fury-signifying passion of these same romantics. All this we find in the music of Peter Tschaïkowsky, all this and more. Tschaïkowsky, artistically, is another descendant of Liszt and Berlioz, with a superadded Slavic color — or, shall I say flavor? Tschaïkowsky deliberately, though without malice, abandoned the old symphonic form. Ravished by what Henry James calls the "scenic idea," though without compelling talent for the theatre, he poured into the elastic and anonymous mould of the symphonic poem passion and poetry. A poetic dramatist, he selected as typical motives Hamlet, Francesca da Rimini, Romeo and Juliet, Don Juan, Jeanne d'Arc, and Manfred; his six symphonies are romantic suites, resplendent with the pomp and color of an imagination saturated in romanticism. His fierce Cossack temperament and mingling of realistic, sensuous savagery and Malo-Russian mysticism set

him apart among composers. As musical as Wagner or Brahms, he lacks the great central, intellectual grip of these two masters. He never tested his genius with fundamental brain-work. But if we wish a picture of musical psychological life of the latter half of this century, it is to Tschaïkowsky that we must go.

Rubinstein I do not consider a factor in the musical strife. He was an ardent upholder of both camps, and, being a German-Russian and a Russian-German Jew and Lutheran, his eclecticism proved his undoing. Something of the same sort may be said of Saint-Saëns, the clever Frenchman. Grieg built his nest overlooking Norwegian fjords, and built it of bright colored bits of Schumann and Chopin. He is the bird with the one sweet, albeit monotonous note. He does not count seriously. Neither does Dvořák, of Bohemia, who, despite his intimate mastery of orchestral color, has never said anything particularly novel or profound. Smetana is his superior at every point. Eugen d'Albert treads with care the larger footprints of Brahms; and Goldmark, a very Makart in his prodigal amazements of color, has contributed a few canvases to the gallery. But Germany and Austria, with one exception, are dead. I do not count Bruckner; he patterned after Wagner too closely. Italy, with the exception of Boïto, is as bare of big young talent as Mother Hubbard's cupboard. France has Massenet, Bruneau, Saint-Saëns,

César Franck, Vincent d'Indy, Fauré, Charpentier, Lalo — !

We have heard little except a string quartet of Claude Debussy's in New York. The music to Maeterlinck's Pelléas and Mélisande is so absolutely wedded to the play, so incidental in the true sense of a much-abused word, that as absolute music it is unthinkable. Hearing it you set the composer down as lacking ear. But Richard Strauss *via* the music of Wagner, Liszt, and Berlioz has set the pace for the cacophonists. Debussy, notwithstanding his unquestionable musicianship, is obviously a "literary" composer. That is to say, his brain must first be excited by the contemplation of a dramatic situation, a beautiful bouquet of verse, a picture, a stirring episode in a novel. But why cavil whether the initial impulse for his music be the need of money or Da Vinci's Mona Lisa! A composer who can set Mallarmé's difficult L'Après Midi, and the more recondite poems of Baudelaire, need not be daunted by criticism as to his methods of work. Take this Pelléas music for example; it is a perfect specimen of decomposition. The musical phrase is dislocated; the rhythms are decomposed, the harmonic structure is pulled to pieces, melts before our eyes — or ears; is resolved into its constituent parts. And his themes are often developed in opposition to all laws of musical syntax. In Debussy's peculiar idiom there

seems to be no normal sequence — I say seems, for it is simply because our ears are not accustomed to the novel progressions and apparent forced conjunctions of harmonies and thematic fragments. Tonalities are vague, even violently unnatural. The introduction to the forest scene, where Golaud discovers Mélisande is of a singular sweetness. The composer has caught, without anxious preoccupation, the exact note of Maeterlinck, and he never misses the note throughout the opera. As it is impossible to divorce music and text, — Debussy seems to be Maeterlinck's musical other self, — so it is a useless task to point out the beauties, the ugliness, the characteristic qualities of the score. In the piano partition nothing may be gleaned of its poetic fervor, its bold landscape painting, its psychologic penetration. There are some isolated spots where the orchestra soliloquizes, though few. It is the complete enveloping of Maeterlinck's strangely beautiful play with a musical atmosphere that wins the attention. It is easy to conceive of the play apart from the music, but not of the music as a separate entity.

Debussy, then, has a musical idiom of his own. He is a stylist and an impressionist. There are purples on his palette — no blacks. If the Western world ever adopted Eastern tonalities, Claude Debussy would be the one composer who would manage its system, with its quarter-tones and split quarters. The man seems a

wraith from the East; his music was heard long ago in the hill temples of Borneo, was made as a symphony to welcome the head-hunters with their ghastly spoils of war! Debussy's future should be viewed with suspicion from all the critical watch-towers.

In Belgium there are major talents such as Peter Benoit, Gilson, Edgar Tinel, Jan Blockx, Lekeu, Van der Stucken — the last named was one of the first among the young Belgians to compose tone-poems.

Charles Martin Loeffler is an Alsatian with French blood in his artistic veins. He belongs by affinity to the Belgian group. His symphonic poem is called The Death of Tintagiles after the mysterious and horrible drama of Maurice Maeterlinck — whose plays, despite their exquisite literary quality, act better than they read. Mr. Loeffler's poem was first produced in Boston under Emil Paur's direction, January 8, 1898. Then there were two violas d'amore employed in the obligato, perhaps symbolizing the sobbing voices of Tintagiles and Ygraine. Since that performance — when Messrs. Kneisel and Loeffler played the violas — the composer has dispensed with one of these quaint instruments, has remodelled the score and has also re-orchestrated it.

Thoroughly subjective as must ever be the highest type of the symphonic poem, The Death of Tintagiles is rather a series of shifting mood-pictures than an attempt to portray the drama

too objectively. One feels the horrid suspense of the storm — it is a sinister night! — and what went on behind closed doors in that gloomy castle not far from the sonorous breakers on the beach. There is soul strife, but it is muted. Life here is a tragedy too deep for blood or tears, and the silence — the Loeffler orchestra can suggest hideous and profound silence when playing fortissimo — has the true Maeterlinckian quality.

And then Ygraine's agony, as she searches for her murdered brother, Tintagiles, — "I have come up, come up high, countless steps between high, pitiless walls," — can be poignantly felt. Those four harsh knocks, like the knocking at the gate in Macbeth, must surely indicate the tragedy embouched in hidden spaces.

The music, considered as music, is very beautiful. It easily ranks its composer among the stronger of the modern men. Loeffler is primarily a painter, and then a poet. He seldom sounds the big heroic note; he is too subtle, and a despiser of the easily compassed. His orchestral prose is rather the prose of Walter Pater than the prose of — say, Macaulay or Meyerbeer. Despising the cheap and grandiose, he has formulated a style that is sometimes "precious" in its intensity and avoidance of the phrase banal. A colorist, his tints begin where other men's leave off; and his palette is richer than the rainbow's. In general "tone" he

hovers between the modern Russians and Richard Strauss.

In theme he is Loeffler. The Death of Tintagiles has enclosed within it much lacerating emotion, many new color perspectives, many harmonic devices, and withal a human, though somewhat sublimated human, quality which endears the music at the first hearing.

Despite its psychology, it is always music for music's sake. There is formal structure — Loeffler's form — and a distinct climax. The sparing use of the exotic-toned viola d'amore is most telling. The fanfares, recalling the dim triumphs of the dusty dead, are superbly effective; and the cantilena is ever touching. It is all poetic, "atmospheric" music, yet it is none the less moving and dramatic.

Here then is the present situation: Wagner preaching in his music dreams; Tschaïkowsky passionately declaiming the cumulative woes of mankind in accents most pathetically dramatic; Brahms leisurely breasting the turbid billows of this maelstrom and speaking in golden tones the doctrine of art for art's sake; and, finally, Richard Strauss, a *Übermensch* himself, seeking with furious and rhythmic gestures to divert from the theatre the art he loves — who shall say whither all this will lead? After Wagner — music for music's own symphonic sake, and not for impossible librettos, acting-singers, and scene-painters.

## II

## WAGNER AND THE FRENCH

Stendhal — Henry Beyle — once wrote: —

"Romanticism is the art of presenting to people the literary works which in the actual state of their habits and beliefs are capable of giving them the greatest possible pleasure; classicism, on the contrary, is the art of presenting them with that which gave the greatest possible pleasure to their grandfathers."

That the reaction from a brutal realism, a minute photography of nasty details, would come in Parisian art was a foregone conclusion to any acute observer of the history of literature, art, and music since Goethe's imperial mind set the fashion of things in the early years of the last century. The splendor of Théophile Gautier's famous "gilet rouge," — he declared that it was a pink doublet, — which graced the memorable days of the first violent representations of Ernani, was naught but a scarlet protest against the frozen classicism of Cherubini the composer, the painters Ingres and David, and the worship of writers like Boileau, Racine, and Malherbe. A wild rush toward romanticism was inevitable after the colorless elegiacs of Lamartine. And the grand old man at Weimar, in the twilight of his glorious career, summed up the whole movement of 1830 by saying: — "They all come from Châteaubriand."

But Victor Hugo, Théophile Gautier, Delacroix, Chopin, Alfred de Musset, George Sand, Franz Liszt, Heinrich Heine, and later, Charles Baudelaire, in fact all that brilliant coterie which was the nucleus of the artistic rebellion, strove at first independently, with little knowledge of the others' doings. They possibly came from Châteaubriand, whose Genius of Christianity was but a return to Middle Age ideals: but Walter Scott, with his great romantic historical novels, and Lord Byron, with his glowing, passionate verse, were the true progenitors of the reaction against stiff scholasticism; and their influence even stirred phlegmatic Germany, with its Gallic lacquer, to new and bolder utterances. Heinrich Heine, an exile who spoke of himself as a "German swallow who had built a nest in the periwig of M. Voltaire," threw himself into the fray with pen dipped in sparkling vitriol and did doughty deeds for the cause.

Frédéric Chopin, despite the limited field of a piano keyboard, was the unconscious centre of all the hazy, purple dreams, drifting ideals, and perfumed sprays of thought that to-day we call romanticism. As the hub of that vast wheel of poesy and gorgeous imaginings, he absorbed the spirit of the time and shot out radiant spokes, which lived after the whole romantic school became a faded flower, a pallid ghost of the yesteryear. Hugo flamed across the historical canvas like a painted scarlet meteor; Berlioz's mad tal-

ent, expressed by his symbolical coloring in orchestration — color carried to insanity pitch — was a lesser musical Hugo. Delacroix, with his brush dipped in the burning sun, painted vertigoes of color and audacities of conception. All was turbulent exaggeration, all was keyed above the normal pitch of life, and in the midst the still, small voice of Chopin could be heard.

The end had come to all monstrous growths of the romantic epoch in French art — be it remembered that earlier the movement was equally as strong in Germany, beginning with Novalis, Schlegel, Tieck, Schubert, Schumann, and Jean Paul Richter; the revolution of 1848 shattered the dream of the mad republicans of art. That sphinx-like nonentity, the third Napoleon, mounted the imperial tribune, and the Cerberus of Realism barked its first hoarse bark. For a time this phantasmagoria dominated Parisian art and letters.

All this was typical of cynicism, unbelief; technical perfection was carried to heights undreamed of, and the outcome of it all was Émile Zola. French painting was realized in the miniature manner of Meissonier, or later in the marvellous brutalities of Degas. Two geniuses who attempted to stem the tide that ran so swiftly died untimely deaths: Georges Bizet, the creator of Carmen, and Henri Regnault, who painted the Moorish Execution in the Luxembourg. The last-named perished before Bougi-

val in 1871, done to death by a spent Prussian bullet. These two remarkable men, with possibly the addition of Fortuny, the Spanish virtuoso of arabesques in color, might have changed history if they had lived. But the fates willed it otherwise, and realism became the shibboleth.

Even that ardent young group, the Parnassians, as they called themselves, were beguiled into this quagmire of folly and half-truths. La Terre marked the lowest depths of the bog, and again a reaction began. Leconte de Lisle, Sully-Prudhomme, the graceful Banville (a belated romanticist), Coppée, Puvis de Chavannes; the impressionists, Monet, Manet, Rodin, the sculptor; the poets, René Ghil, Catulle Mendès, Verlaine, ill-fated Albert Glatigny, Anatole France, unhappy de Maupassant, and our own countrymen, Stuart Merrill and Vielé-Griffin began steering for other waters. Symbolism, Buddhism, every *ism* imaginable, have been at the rudder since then. Synthetic subtlety in art was the watchword of the party of new ideas, and a renaissance of the arts seemed to be at hand. For this movement, which agitated artistic Paris, the younger and fierier spirits, musicians, painters, actors, poets, and sculptors, banded, and, emulative of Richard Wagner's Bayreuthian ideal, began the fabrication of a new art, or rather the synthesis of all arts, which seemed the wildest and most extrav-

agant dream ever conceived by a half-dozen frenzied brains.

The history of art moves in cycles, and each cycle carries with it a residuum of the last. Richard Wagner attempted on a gigantic scale a synthesis of the arts. He wished to condense, concentrate, epitomize in his music-drama the arts of mimicry or pantomime, elocution, singing, painting, sculpture, architecture, drama, and instrumental music. He literally levied tribute on two of the senses and welded them into an ensemble, in which every shade of emotion, particularly the heroic and the tender, was depicted. But Wagner's genius is, after all, Teutonic in its diffusiveness. He could not escape his national environment.

"Fifteen years ago," said Paul Bourget, "poetry's ambition was in picturesqueness and execution to rival painting. To-day it models itself on music. It is preoccupied with effects of mystery, of shadow, of the intangible. This is strikingly illustrated in the verse of Verlaine, whose poetic creed I have given you before in the 'O la nuance, seule fiance, Le rêve au rêve et la flute au cor.'" These new men are musicians in words. They follow Wagner; above all are they descendants of Edgar Allan Poe, who has literally deflected the mighty wave of French literature into his neglected channel. Ah, if we but appreciated Poe as do our Gallic brethren! Mallarmé and Gustav Kahn produce

verbal effects akin to music, with its melancholy mystery.

It is Richard Wagner who has done much of all this, preceded by Poe. Symbolism, a soft green star, is but a pin-prick in the inverted bowl of the night, but it sings like flame in thin glass. Its song is as beautiful as the twilights of Chopin's garden, or as the wavings of the trees in Wagner's luminous forest. Slowly but resistlessly, and despite himself, — for Wagner never bridled his tongue where the French were concerned, — this positive force conquered France, and penetrated, not alone the musical world, but to the world of letters, of moral ideas. It is nothing short of a miracle. The revolt all along the line, as manifested by the impressionists in painting, who preferred to use their eyes and see an infinity of tintings in nature, undreamed of by the painters of a generation ago; the poets and littérateurs who formed the new group called The Companions of the New Life, whose aspirations are for the ideal of morality, justice; sculptors like Marc Antokolsky and Auguste Rodin, who sought to hew great ideas from the rude rock, instead of carving lascivious prettiness, — all these new spirits, I say, but fell in with the vast revolution instituted by Richard Wagner. In the region of moral ideas Melchior de Vogüé, Ernest Lavisse, and Paul Desjardins are combating the artistic indifferentism and black despair of the school of materialists, real-

ists, and the rest. A new idea in France germinates as in no other country on the globe, because it finds congenial soil somewhere. From an idea to a school is but a short step, hence the rapidity of the Wagner worship after it once took root.

## III

### ISOLDE AND TRISTAN

You notice the inversion! Wagner's music-drama primarily concerns the woman; she is the protagonist, not Tristan. Even in Act III, where this lover of lovers lies awaiting Isolde and death, it is her psychology which most concerns the composer. So I call it Isolde and Tristan — the subjugation of man by woman.

It was Wagner himself who confessed that he had thrown overboard his theories while penning this marvellous score. In it the music stifles the action. It is the very flowering of the Wagnerian genius; his best self, his fantasy, his wonderful power of making music articulate, are there. And from the tiny acorn in the prelude grows the mighty oak of the symphonic drama.

There is something primal, something of the rankness of nature, of life's odor and hum, and life's fierce passions in this music — music before which all other pictures of love made by poet, painter, and composer pale. It is one of the most complex scores in existence; yet it is built

upon but one musical motive. Because of its epical quality Tristan and Isolde may be compared to the works of the Greek dramatists, to the Divine Comedy, to Hamlet, and to Faust.

Its weltering symphonic mass is as the surge and thunder of tropical seas. It seems almost incomprehensible for a single human brain to have conceived and carried to fruition such a magnificent composition. In it are the pains, pleasures, and consoling philosophies of life. Hamlet and Faust are its spiritual brethren. The doubting, brooding spirit of these two dreamers are united to the pessimistic, knightly nature of Tristan. He is human, all too human; as Nietzsche phrased it — but he is also the human glorified.

He has grafted upon his mediæval soul the modern spirit, which we are pleased to believe Schopenhauer typified in his profoundly pessimistic philosophy. But this spirit is as old as Himalaya's hills. Saka-Munyi sang of the pains of love centuries ago; and the bliss-stricken pair, Tristan and Isolde, dive down to death, groping as they sink, for the problems of life, love, and mortality. Death and Love is the eternal dualism chanted by Wagner in this drama. And has the theme ever been chanted so enthrallingly?

No one of Wagner's works enchains the imagination as does this glowing picture of love and despair. From the first beautiful prelude to Isolde's exquisite death-song — one of those

songs the world will not willingly let perish — we are as in a hypnotic trance. The action is psychologic rather than theatric. We are permitted to view two burning souls; we analyze, rejoice and suffer in their psychical adventures. This is not the drama of romantic wooing and the clash of swords; all conventions of music and drama are set aside, are denied. There is a love philter, but it is not the philter which arouses the fatal love; the love is implicit in the lovers before the curtain lifts.

We are given a night scene of magical beauty — yet how different from the usual banal operatic assignation. In an old-time, Old-World forest a man and a woman have revealed their souls; sobbing in the distance is the soft horn music of the kingly hunt. Now it is love against the world, the relentless instinct that mocks at conventional gyves. Was ever such an enchanting romance sung? The very moonlight seems melodious. After the storm and stress of the first act this scene recalls Heine's This is the Fairy Wood of Old. Wagner's philosophy should concern us but little; his music is his metaphysic; its beauty and dramatic significance are worth tomes of his theories. There is the superb web and woof of this tonal tapestry, the most eloquent orchestra that ever stormed or sighed; there is every accent and nuance of human speech, faithfully reproduced; and above all there hovers the imagination of the poet-

composer. These thematic nuggets, these motives of love and death, which paint the lives of his men and women — are they not wonderfully conceived, wonderfully developed? Berlioz it was who confessed that the prelude to this music-drama proved ever an enigma to him. Wagner's melodic curves of intensity mirror the soul's perturbations. He is poet of passion, a master of thrilling tones, a magician who everywhere finds willing thralls.

And the music — how it searches the nerves. How it throws into the background, because of its intensity, all the love lays ever penned by mortal composer! How it appeals to the intellect with its exalted realism! This music is not for those who admire the pink prettiness of Gounod's Romeo and Juliet. It is music that would have been loved by that "fierce and splendid old man," Walter Savage Landor, by Shelley, by Byron and Walt Whitman — the latter once confessed to me his love for Wagner; "it makes my old bones sweeter," he said — but it would not have been admired by Wordsworth or Tennyson. Swinburne adores Wagner almost as much as he adores the sea, and he sings the praise of both with an absence of reserve that recalls the *mot* of Vauvenargues: "To praise moderately is always a sign of mediocrity."

Yet in Tristan and Isolde are the seeds of the morbid, the hysterical, and the sublimely erotic — hall marks of most great modern works of

art. And there is, too, the *Katharsis* of Aristotle, the purification by pity and terror. This dominating tragic principle places the drama within the category of the classic.

Ernest Newman, in his Study of Wagner, an epoch-making work in musical criticism, puts the question in its exact bearings. Wagner is a great *musical*-dramatist — his dramas alone could not stand on their legs, so otiose are they. His poetry, *quâ* poetry, is second-rate; but as "words for music," words that fly well in the wind of his inspiration, they are unique. This composer was harassed all his life long by the word "drama." He believed that a perfect union of music and drama could be effected — vain dream — and wasted much valuable time and good white paper trying to prove his thesis. To the end his musical ruled his dramatic instincts; he was always the composer. Tristan and Isolde is the most signal instance of this. Its Greek-like severity of form in the book, its paucity of incident, were so many barriers removed for the poet-composer who, hampered by the awful weight of material in the Ring, had to write ineffectual music at times.

Newman thinks that the last scene of Act II of Isolde and Tristan is an anti-climax. From a theatric viewpoint, yes; but not so if Wagner the composer be considered. If he had dropped the curtain on the infatuated pair — as he does in Act I of Die Walküre — a whole

skein of the moving story would have been missing. The action is pulled up with a jerk by Melot's entrance; yet what follows is worth a volume of plays with the conventional thrilling "curtain." Think of the drama without Marke's speech, without that compassion and love which Isolde and Tristan exhibit, oblivious to all about them! Besides, the scene needs a quieter, withal more tragic, note than the endings of Acts I and III. Suppose that the King, Tristan's uncle, had been like that other monarch sung of by Heinrich Heine: —

Oh, there's a king, a grim old king, with beard both long and gray.
The king is old. The queen is young. Her face is fresh as May.
And there's a lad, a laughing lad, so blithe and debonair,
The queen herself has chosen him, her silken train to bear.
How runs the tale, that good grave tale the peasant women tell?
"So both of them were put to death, for loving over well."

There has been so much discussion over the so-called slow *tempi* of Bayreuth that it is time to shatter the little legend with stern facts. A well-known conductor who has presided at Bayreuth relates that when an old man Richard Wagner would occasionally take up the baton and conduct Parsifal or Tristan at a rehearsal, his admiration for his own music — an admiration that was starved during his exile — manifested itself in a tendency to dragging *tempi*.

The venerable composer retarded each bar as if to squeeze from it the last lingering drop of sweetness. This trait was noticed and copied by the younger generation of conductors. The elder group, Richter, Levi, and Seidl had and have the true tradition. The later one simply means that Wagner's pulse beat was older and slower. To slavishly imitate this is but a sign of the humor-breeding snobbery now so rife at Wahnfried. The music itself is the best refutation of such folly.

Wagner lets Love beckon Death to its side, and together Love and Death, inseparable companions from time's infancy, close the drama, the king sadly gazing at the meeting of the great clear sky and sea, while Brangaene, near by, is bruised and bent with immitigable grief.

What a picture, what a tale, what music!

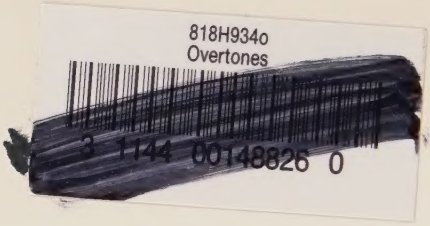
"The world will find a wholesome reaction in the study of music from its spiritual side, its inner life. In the laws of tonality the most musical and the least musical will have a common ground of interest. By study of tone, character, or mental effects, we are led to realize that the marvellous intuition of Pythagoras, Plato, and Aristotle was correct, that music is the basis of all human development." This, by an author unknown to me, is a prophecy of the track that music must take if it is to ascend. Intellectual music, music that does not appeal merely to the feverish nerves of this generation, is what we

need; and by intellectual music I do not mean too complex or abstract music, abstract in the sense of lacking human interest. Is there no mean between the brawls and lusts of Mascagni's peasant folk and the often abstruse delving of Brahms? Surely to think high means to hear plainly — or else Wordsworth is mistaken. We fret, fumble, and analyze too much in our arts. Why cannot we have the Athenian gladness and simplicity of Mozart, with the added richness of Richard Strauss? Must knowledge ever bring with it pain and weariness of life? Is there no fruit in this Armida garden that is without ashes? Why cannot we accept music without striving to extort from it metaphysical meanings? There is Mozart's G minor symphony — in its sunny measures is sanity. To perdition with preachers and pedagogues! Open the casements of your soul; flood it with music, and sing with Shelley: —

> Music when soft voices die
> Vibrates in the memory.

## NOTE

Several of the foregoing essays have appeared in Scribner's Magazine, the Musical Courier, Criterion, Harper's Bazar, Metropolitan, New York Sun, and elsewhere. They have been greatly altered and amplified for republication. The study of Parsifal, the major part of which was first printed in the Musical Courier, has been rigorously revised and much enlarged. A few anecdotes of Richard Strauss must be credited to the London Musical Times.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